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REPORT

OF THE

BI-CENTENNIAL JUBILEE

OF THE

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH,

IN

WOODBURY, CONN.,

Held May 5th, 1870.

By WILLIAM COTHREN.

NEW HAVEN:

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1870.

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INTRODUCTION.

For several years past it had been a matter of consultation and agreement between the writer and Dea. PHILIP M. TROWBRIDGE, that when the Bi-Centennial year of the existence of our Church approached, they would suggest to the brethren the desirability of a proper observance of its natal day. It was thought to be appropriate to celebrate so joyous an anniversary. It was believed to be well to set up a monument to mark the passage of the ages. It was thought fitting that the Church, which had for two hundred years acknowledged the same confession of faith, and "owned the same covenant," written and adopted by the fathers by the shores of Long Island Sound, taken "from out the Word," should, with devout joy and thanksgiving, render praise to Almighty God for all His wonderful mercies toward it. We could do no less than to render thanks to the Lord. It seemed to redound to His glory and our great good.

In accordance with these views the subject was brought before the Church, and the following action was taken by it and the Committee of its appointment :

"ANNUAL MEETING OF THE FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, SEPT. 16, 1869.

"*Voted*, That Deacons Trowbridge and Linsley, and Brother William Cothren be a Committee with power to make full arrangements for a public observance, on the fifth day of May next, of the Two-Hundredth Anniversary of the organization of this Church."

The Committee held its first formal meeting February 22, 1870, and, after due consideration,

"*Voted*, That it is inexpedient to occupy more than one day with the exercises contemplated in the action of the Church.

"*Voted*, That the Mother Church, at Stratford, and the six daughters of this, be invited to be present, and participate in the exercises.

“*Voted*, That the morning exercises commence at ten o’clock, A. M., and the order be that of the Sabbath, followed by the communion.

“*Voted*, That the Pastor be invited to deliver the sermon, and that he invite the Pastor of the Church at Stratford to assist him at the Communion.

“*Voted*, That the Deacons of the Mother Church, of this, and the North Church, pass the emblems at the Communion.

“*Voted*, That these exercises close at twelve o’clock, M., and that forty-five minutes be here given for refreshments.

“*Voted*, That the dedicatory exercises at the Fathers’ Monument consist of a Prayer, an Address, and a Poem, and that they occupy half an hour, in the whole.”

COMMITTEE MEETING, FEB. 28, 1870.

“*Voted*, That the P. M. exercises commence fifteen minutes before two o’clock, and that they consist of—1. Prayer; 2. Address of greeting; 3. Response from the Mother Church, and also from each of the other churches invited; 4. Addresses from ex-ministers of this church, and others, reading of letters, &c.

“*Voted*, That the chairman report the preceding to the Church on Friday of the present week, for its amendment and approval. It was reported, and was adopted.”

COMMITTEE MEETING, MARCH 21, 1870.

“*Voted*, That Brother Cothren be instructed to prepare sentiments for responses from each of the churches invited.”

The Chairman was directed to issue the following letter to the Church at Stratford, and attend to all necessary correspondence resulting therefrom.

First Congregational Church in Woodbury to the Congregational Church in Stratford:

DEAR BRETHREN:—You, the Mother Church of this, are hereby invited to meet with us, by Pastor and Deacons, *at least*, at ten o’clock, A. M., on Thursday, the fifth day of May next, and participate in the exercises of the Two Hundredth Anniversary of the organization of this Church.

We have invited the following Churches, all daughters of this, viz: the Congregational Churches of Southbury, Bethlehem, Washington, Roxbury, South Britain and the North Church in Woodbury.

P. M. TROWBRIDGE,
J. H. LINSLEY,
WILLIAM COTHREN,
} Committee.

WOODBURY, March 25, 1870.

The Chairman was also instructed to issue letters of like import to the other Churches.

The following ladies were appointed—

COMMITTEE ON DECORATIONS:

Mrs. WILLIAM COTHREN,	MISS JULIA BULL,
Mrs. HENRY LAMBERT,	MRS. E. BENHAM,
Mrs. COL. N. SMITH,	MISS EMILY CURTISS,
MISS HELEN L. SEDGWICK.	

The following gentlemen were appointed—

FINANCE COMMITTEE:

C. W. KIRTLAND,	W. S. CURTISS,
GEO. DEFOREST.	

The following gentlemen were appointed—

COMMITTEE ON REFRESHMENTS, &c.

JAMES H. LINSLEY,	HORACE D. CURTISS,
WILLIAM SMITH,	HORACE MINOR.

COMMITTEE ON FLORAL DECORATIONS.

KATE M. WOODRUFF,	HATTIE JUDSON,
MRS. SUSAN E. SHOVE.	

DECORATIVE ARTIST.

HENRY C. CURTIS, Hartford, Conn.

The programme for the occasion, as finally arranged and agreed upon, was as follows, viz:

B I - C E N T E N N I A L

OF THE

First Congregational Church,

Woodbury, May 5, 1870.

P R O G R A M M E . A . M .

EXERCISES WILL COMMENCE PRECISELY AT TEN O'CLOCK, A. M., AND WILL BE AS FOLLOWS:

1. The Congregation will unite in singing—
"PRAISE GOD, FROM WHOM ALL BLESSINGS FLOW."
2. READING OF SCRIPTURE, By the PASTOR
3. PRAYER, By the PASTOR
4. SINGING. HYMN 339.
5. SERMON, By the PASTOR
6. PRAYER, REV. JOHN CHURCHILL
7. BENEDICTION.

RECESS OF FIVE MINUTES.

8. COMMUNION, REV. MESSRS. G. W. NOTES and WM. K. HALL, officiating.
9. RECESS of forty-five minutes for Collation at Town Hall.
10. DEDICATION OF FATHERS' MONUMENT, at fifteen minutes before one o'clock. These exercises will consist of

1. DEDICATORY PRAYER, REV. THOMAS L. SHIPMAN
2. " ADDRESS, WILLIAM COTHREN
3. " POEM, REV. W. T. BACON
4. " HYMN, WILLIAM COTHREN
5. BENEDICTION, REV. AUSTIN ISHAM

P R O G R A M M E. P. M.

THE SERVICES AT THE CHURCH WILL BE RESUMED AT FIFTEEN MINUTES BEFORE TWO O'CLOCK, P. M., AND WILL BE

1. SINGING. HYMN 329.
2. PRAYER. REV. AUSTIN ISHAM
3. SINGING.
4. GREETING. REV. H. WINSLOW
5. SENTIMENT—STRATFORD, . . . Response by REV. W. K. HALL
6. SINGING. HYMN—THE PILGRIMS.
7. SENTIMENT—SOUTHBURY. . . Response by REV. A. B. SMITH
8. SINGING.
9. SENTIMENT—BETHLEHEM. . . Response by REV. GEO. W. BANKS
10. SENTIMENT—JUDEA. . . Response by REV. W. S. COLTON
11. SINGING.
12. SENTIMENT—ROXBURY. . . Response by REV. A. B. GOODENOUGH
13. SINGING.
14. SENTIMENT—SOUTH BRITAIN. . . Response by REV. H. S. NEWCOMB
15. SINGING. HYMN—Our Fathers' God is with us.
16. SENTIMENT—NORTH WOODBURY. Response by REV. JOHN CHURCHILL
17. SINGING.
18. READING OF LETTERS, &c.
19. CONCLUDING PRAYER. REV. G. W. NOYES
20. DOXOLOGY.
21. BENEDICTION.

All the committees, under the inspiration of the general committee, performed their several duties with alacrity, fidelity and ability, and every thing was "made ready" for the successful inauguration of the interesting ceremonies of the approaching jubilee.

With the aid of the ready hands and executive ability of the ladies, the church was most beautifully decorated by Mr. Henry C. Curtis, a special artist, of Hartford. A more striking and appropriate mode of decoration could not have been devised, than that adopted by Mr. Curtis, whether considered historically or artistically. It is a remarkable fact that the first four pastors of the church occupied the pulpit, in the aggregate, the long period of 172 years, out of the two hundred celebrated. We think this a length of time unparalleled in the history of the churches in this country. This fact was beautifully represented by introducing the four names; Walker, Stoddard, Benedict and Andrew, into a large cross composed of six circles, the names occupying four of the six circles, "172 years" the center, and a cross the lower circle. This was placed in the recess behind the pulpit. Beneath the cross were two tablets, the one containing the "covenant of 1670," and the other the names of the original signers.

THE COVENANT OF 1670.

"WE, whose names are hereunto subscribed, being (by y^e all-disposing providence of God, who determines y^e bounds of men's habitations) cast into co-habitation on wth another, and being sensible of o^r duty unto God, and one to another, and of o^r liableness to be forgetfull, and neglective of y^e one and y^e other, do hereby (for y^e further incitent of o^rselves unto duty in either respect) solemnly give up o^rselves & ours unto y^e lord, engaging o^rselves by his assisting grace to walk before him, in y^e religious observance of his revealed will, as far as it is or shall be made known unto us. We do also in y^e presence of God solemnly ingage o^rselves each to other to walk together in church-society, according to the rule of y^e gospel, jointly attending all y^e holy ordinances of God, as far as it shall please him to make way thereunto, and give opportunity y^e of : and walking on wth another in bro herly love, & chtian wachfullness for o^r mutual edification, and furtherance in y^e way to salvation. And jointly submitting o^rselves & ours to y^e goverment of Cht in his church, in y^e hand of such church governors, or officers as shall be set over us, according to gospel institution. The good lord make us faithfull in covenant with him & one wth another, to walk as becomes a people near unto himself, accept of y^e offering up of o^rselves, &

ours unto him and establish both us and y^m to be a people unto himself in his abundant mercy through cht jesus, who is o^r only mediator in whom alone we expect acceptance, justification and salvation : to him be glory & praise through all ages. Amen.

The names of y^e persons y^t subscribed this covenant, & again publickly owned it, May 5th, viz : y^e day of my ordination were as followeth :

ZECHARIAH WALKER,	HOPE WASHBORN,
SAMUEL SHERMAN, Sen ^r ,	HUGH GRIFFIN,
JOSEPH JUDSON, Sen ^r ,	EPHRAIM STILES,
JOHN HURD, Sen ^r ,	JOHN THOMPSON, Jun ^r ,
NICHOLAS KNELL,	THEOPHILUS SHERMAN,
ROBERT CLARK,	MATTHEW SHERMAN,
JOHN MINOR,	JOHN JUDSON,
SAMUEL SHERMAN, Jun ^r ,	SAMUEL MILS,
JOHN WHEELER,	BENJAMIN STILES,
SAMUEL STILES,	EDWARD SHERMOND.

Persons since added:

JOHN SKEELES,	RICHARD BUTLER,
ISRAEL CURTISS,	ROBERT LANE,
THOMAS FFAIRECHILDE,	MOSES JOHNSON,
RICHARD HARVY.	

Between the tablets was the name of the present pastor, Rev. Gurdon W. Noyes, in golden letters. At the apex of the recess above the pulpit was an elegant golden cross and crown. At the top of the pillars on either side of the pulpit, was a large golden "C," on which appeared the years 1670—1870, under which, respectively, was a list of the deacons of the first and second centuries, on tablets upon the pillars :

Deacons of the 1st Century.

Hon. John Minor,
Samuel Miles,
Matthew Sherman,
Hon. John Sherman,
Matthew Mitchell,
Z. Walker, Jr.,
Samuel Sherman,
Samuel Minor,
John Minor,
Hon. Daniel Sherman,
Gideon Stoddard,

Deacons of the 2d Century.

Clement Minor,
Josiah Minor,
Matthew Minor,
Daniel Huntington,
Nathan Atwood,
Ens. Seth Minor, Jr.,
Benjamin Judson, Jr.,
Judson Blackman,
Eli Summers,
Truman Minor,
P. M. Trowbridge,
J. H Linsley.

On the panels of the gallery face were the names of the mother church at Stratford, and the six churches which have gone out from the first church, with the date of their organization, viz: Stratford, 1639; Southbury, 1731; Bethlehem, 1739; Judea, 1741; Roxbury, 1743; South Britain, 1766; and North Woodbury, 1816. On the two panels nearest the pulpit were the names of the pastors succeeding the first four, viz:—Wright, Strong, Curtis, Williams, Robinson, Little and Winslow. A beautiful white dove was suspended from the pulpit desk beneath the bible, which, with outstretched wings, seemed to be alighting upon the communion table below. The pulpit was splendidly decorated. Festoons extended from the corners of the church to the center ornament in the ceiling, whence descended a large anchor, beautifully wreathed in evergreens and flowers, while wreaths ran along the galleries, over and below the recess, and to the letter "C" at the caps of the pillars, above which appeared two century plants. The whole was completed with the mottoes "Welcome," and "We Greet You." Throughout the house, in the lamp brackets, were vases and baskets of flowers and drooping plants, producing the finest and most artistic effect.

The clearest and balmiest day of the year heralded the coming exercises. We could but feel and see the favoring smile of that good Providence, who has so wisely and tenderly watched over this church during the two centuries of its existence. At an early hour, the people of this and the neighboring towns began to assemble, the streets were lined with vehicles of every description which had come from the hills and valleys of the "ancient town," and the church was almost immediately filled to its utmost capacity. Settees and chairs were carried into the aisles above and below. The vestibule and every place where standing room could be found were immediately filled, while there was a large crowd without, which could gain no admission. There must have been more than 1,500 people in attendance. As a test of this estimate, it may be remarked, that 1,000 collation tickets had been issued, and yet it became necessary for the committees to admit large numbers, who had not been provided with tickets.

Pursuant to the admirably arranged programme of Dea. P. M. Trowbridge, chairman of the general committee, the exercises commenced precisely at 10 A. M., by the great congregation rising and singing "Praise God from whom all blessings flow." The reading

of an appropriate selection of scripture, and prayer by the pastor next followed, after which the congregation sang the old, familiar hymn,—“Ye tribes of Adam join,” &c. This was followed by a carefully prepared historical sermon by the pastor, of great beauty and excellence, briefly narrating the history of the church and its pastors for two hundred years.

OPENING PRAYER.

O Lord, Thou alone art great—glorious—good! Hence we would adore and serve Thee. Our fathers worshiped in this mountain; but the fathers, where are they? And the Prophets—do they live forever? Alas! Alas! We do all fade as a 'leaf. Thou carriest us away as with a flood. We spend our years as a tale that is told. But Thou art the same and of Thy years there is no end. Thou hast been the dwelling place of Thy people in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting Thou art God; and Thou hast ever had thoughts of mercy and love toward the children of men. We praise Thee for their early manifestation in the predictions of Thy word and in the advent of Jesus Christ Thy Son and our Savior. We adore Thee for the Church set up in His name and which is graven upon the palms of Thy hands, guarded by Thy power, guided by Thy wisdom and against which Thou hast said the gates of hell shall never prevail. We especially praise Thee at this time for Thy guidance and care of our ancestors in planting a branch thereof in this place. Thou didst cause them to go forth like a flock. Thou didst cast out the heathen before them and divided them an inheritance by line. The wilderness and solitary place soon became glad for them, and the desert rejoiced and blossomed as the rose. They trusted in Thee and Thou didst deliver them from fears and foes; didst prosper the work of their hands. Yea, Thou didst cause the little one to become a thousand and the small one a strong nation. In consequence of their faith, forecast, labor, the lines have fallen to us in pleasant places, and we have a goodly heritage. We have pleasant and fruitful fields, quiet and happy homes, rich and rare, civil, educational and religious privileges. Gathered here in Thy Sanetuary after the lapse of centuries to review the history of Thy dealings, we find that goodness and mercy followed our fathers and

have followed us. We would therefore recall their virtues and catch a new impulse from all that was noble and Christ-like in their example and strive to perfect and perpetuate their work. We know O Lord that it is Thy will, that one generation should praise Thy works to another and abundantly utter the memory of Thy great goodness that men may set their hope in Thee. We praise Thee for our free government and beneficent institutions, with the righteous peace vouchsafed unto us. We entreat Thy blessing upon our President and all in authority in State and Nation, that we may lead quiet and peaceable lives in all godliness and honesty. We pray Thee to bless our Colleges, Schools, Churches, that the Gospel may permeate the land and drive out from it, all ignorance, error, vice, irreligion, and make us a people to Thy praise. And we beseech Thee to send the disenthraling life-giving Gospel over the Globe, that Jesus may speedily have the heathen for his inheritance and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession. And now, O Lord, we humbly invoke Thy presence and blessing during this sacred Jubilee. Smile upon the associated Churches here represented, and those who are to take part in these exercises that they may utter fitting and forceful words, for our profit and Thy Glory. O Lord, shine Thou upon us from Thy Throne of light and love. Yea grant us the favor which Thou bearest unto Thy people through Jesus Christ, Thy Son and our Redeemer. *Amen.*

BI-CENTENNIAL DISCOURSE.

BY THE REV. GURDON W. NOYES.

"I HAVE CONSIDERED THE DAYS OF OLD: THE YEARS OF ANCIENT TIMES."—*Psalm 77: 5.*

To many in this age there is little enchantment in the distant past. The present is so full of duty and enjoyment, and the future is so bright with hope and promise, that they readily forget "The days of old, the years of ancient times." Hereby they lose much of help and cheer in their life-work. It is, as we trace our connection with departed worthies, and realize our indebtedness to them for present privileges and blessings, that we are incited to emulate their virtues, and fitly labor for posterity and Heaven. To-day this church completes a history of two hundred years. Within this

period great events have transpired on this globe in rapid succession ; events which have changed the entire face of human society. Empires have been built up and cast down ; nations have been born and buried ; modes of government, and systems of opinion, have flourished and decayed, and yet amid all these changes, this church has continued steadfast in its faith and worship. Its founders ere long passed away, but they left behind a godly seed, and so from generation to generation this candlestick of the Lord has been kept in its place, and from it has ever shone forth the pure light of the Gospel. It is a fitting time to trace its course, recall the bright names identified with it, and note Heaven's favor toward it. The church and congregation of to-day, on whom has devolved the duty of arranging this celebration, do here and now, through me, most heartily welcome to these sacred festivities all who are drawn hither by filial or fraternal affection. Let us together scan the wisdom and love of God in planting this goodly vine near the Indian wigwam, and keeping it in such vigorous growth down the ages, and join our earnest petitions that it may continue to flourish in the future, ever covering the hills with its shadow, and extending its boughs like goodly cedars.

The church has been signally fortunate in receiving one from another State, William Cothren, Esq., who, in filial love, and with great skill and fidelity, has written her history, and that of the town as well. In this, her records, and kindred sources, I have found such rare and rich materials for a historic sketch, as to be puzzled in deciding what to leave out, so as to bring it within proper limits, and have it symmetrical and just. Aiming only at impartiality, pertinence, accuracy, I frankly submit my work to your kind and Christian consideration. In 1650 the churches of New England began to be agitated by what was termed the half-way covenant system. By this system persons of good moral character, recognizing baptism, assenting to the creed, and signifying their intention of becoming true Christians, were admitted to all the rights and privileges of church members, except partaking of the Lord's Supper. Controversy rose to such a pitch upon the matter, that a council of leading ministers convened in Boston, in 1647, to deliberate upon it, and they decided in its favor. The church in Stratford did not believe in the practice, and would not adopt it, even after the decision. A respectable minority,

however, clung to it, and were uneasy at its disregard, and the more so as they felt that it was largely owing to the influence of Mr. Chauncey, who had been recently settled against their wishes. By earnest argument, and fraternal remonstrance, they sought to secure accordance of views, or if not that, an arrangement by which each party could have its own minister, and worship at different hours of the Sabbath in the same sanctuary. According to the custom of the day, the aid of the general court was called in. The discussion was keen and spirited on both sides, though dignified and courteous. As the result, early in 1668, the minority had the civil sanction to obtain their own minister, and had three hours of the Sabbath to worship in the sanctuary. They soon engaged Rev. Zechariah Walker, a licentiate from Jamaica, L. L., to act as their pastor. But their position was still unpleasant and unsatisfactory, as the other party would allow them no use of the church, and spoke of their unordained minister to *his* and *their* disparagement. So, despairing of any agreement, they determined to set up for themselves. They appointed a day for the purpose, and spending most of it in prayer for the Lord's guidance and blessing, they entered into solemn covenant with God, and one another. Then calling neighboring churches together, and renewing that covenant, which is a model for brevity, scripturalness and beauty, they were constituted the second church in Stratford, on May 5th, 1670, and Mr. Walker was ordained their pastor. Twenty males comprised the church at its outset. Some of them forecasting separation as the probable relief from their difficulties, had made provision for a new sphere for growth and enjoyment, by applying to purchase lands of the Indians, as early as 1667. Accordingly, at the suggestion of Gov. Winthrop, who deemed the course best for the churches and the colony, the court, in May, 1672, granted them the privilege of erecting a plantation at Pomperaug. Early the next spring twenty-five families migrated to this place, then a wilderness. Mr. Walker divided his ministrations between this flock and that at Stratford until June, 1678, when he moved here. Seventeen more had been added to the church, and so it started as the first church of Woodbury, with thirty-seven members, six of whom were females, and full one-third of the half-way covenant type. Yet, few as they were in numbers, busied as they were in procuring food and houses for their fami-

lies, beset as they were with difficulties of every kind, beyond our conception, they cheerfully undertook the sustainment of the Gospel in their midst. They sequestered lands for the use of their pastor, and freely taxed themselves for his support. At first religious services were held in each other's houses in winter, and in summer on the east side of the Orenaug Rocks, with sentinels stationed on their summits, to guard against sudden attack from hostile Indians. On this account the name of Bethel Rock has been given to the spot. In later times, good men, their descendants and others, have repaired thither for meditation and prayer. Hence, though beautiful in itself, with its surroundings of tree, shrub and flower, and for its clear out-look upon the charming valley, it is more so for its historic incidents and hallowed associations. For several years, during King Philip's war, the people were so absorbed in erecting fortified houses, furnishing soldiers for the colony, and providing guards for their own safety, that they could do nothing toward supplying themselves with a place of public worship. But early in 1681, when the stress of care and peril had passed, they took the matter up, and after some little difference of opinion as to the site, they came to a pleasant agreement by leaving the decision to two prominent and disinterested outsiders. The house was at once erected, and stood just below the present residence of Hon. Nathaniel B. Smith. It was large and plain, with pulpit opposite the entrance, and with elevated pews and high-backed seats. The people were called to worship therein by the peculiar tap of a drum upon the high rock nearly opposite. Here Mr. Walker preached the word until his death in 1700, at 63 years of age. His papers in the Stratford discussion evince his learning, ability and piety. His thirty years' hold upon the attention and regard of the people, as well as the harmony and growth of the church, evince his power as a preacher, and his wisdom as a pastor. During his ministry he received one hundred and eight to the church, and baptized three hundred and seventy-six. The church sincerely mourned him as their heroic leader and faithful shepherd.

In the same year they invited Mr. Anthony Stoddard, then just licensed, to preach to them. They soon became so interested in him, as to desire to settle him. As an inducement to this end, the people in lawful town meeting voted as a salary seventy pounds

per annum to be paid in wheat, peas, Indian corn, pork, as also firewood, at the following prices "not to be varied from, extraordinary providences interposing being excepted," to wit: Wheat, 4s. 6d. per bushel; pork at 3 cents per pound; Indian corn, 2s. 6d. per bushel; peas, 3 shillings per bushel. They also voted to build him a house of specified dimensions, he only providing nails and glass, and also a well, and to furnish him with 115 acres of land, properly divided into lots for tillage, pasture, meadow, wood, and conveniently situated. He accepted the call, and was ordained in May, 1702, and moved into the house built for him, and which still stands in the lower part of the village, in a good state of preservation, after the storms of 168 years. It was built in the old lean-to style, of the time, with a small room projecting at the front for a portico, which Mr. Stoddard used as his study for 58 years. May its historic character long keep it from vandal hands, as its palisadoes once kept it from the assaults of the Indians, to remind coming generations of the Christian forecast and self-denial of their fathers! Mr. Stoddard possessed great versatility of mind; had enjoyed the best classical and theological culture of the day, and had been favored with the counsels and example of his eminent father at Northampton. And though retiring to this then obscure parish, he found room and verge enough for the exercise of his rare powers. He soon took rank among the leading ministers of the colony. He was chairman of the committee to draft the original rules of the Litchfield Consociação, and was chosen to preach the election sermon at Hartford, in 1716. He was also as much at home in medicine and law as in theology. According to a custom then quite common, he prepared himself in these departments that he might be useful to his flock when physicians and lawyers were not at hand. He was probate clerk of ancient Woodbury for 40 years, and all the records are in his handwriting. He drew most of the wills of his parishioners; he was also one of the largest farmers in the town. And yet it would seem that he did not suffer these secular labors to interfere with his higher work as the Lord's ambassador.

Under his ministry the church was harmonious and prosperous, while others in the colony experienced dissensions and drawbacks. Though losing many to form churches at Southbury, Bethlehem, Judea, Roxbury, yet through frequent revivals it filled up again.

In the great awakening of 1740, it received 97. Indeed admissions were made during all the years of his ministry save two, amounting to 616—142 of these being by the half-way covenant, most of whom, however, subsequently entered into full communion. He baptized 1540, and ordained five deacons. In the latter part of his ministry he was privileged to preach in a new and finer edifice, built in 1747. With remarkable retention of mental and physical powers, he labored on until his 83d year, when after a two days' illness, he died, esteemed and lamented by the children and grand-children of those whom he had followed to the tomb, and in the midst of whom they reverentially laid his body to await the general resurrection. Just before his death the people had called the Rev. Noah Benedict to settle as his colleague. He had accepted, and the day was fixed for his ordination. He was accordingly ordained Oct. 22, 1760. Mr. B. originated in Danbury; graduated at Nassau Hall in 1757. Though a Barnabas in temperament and manner, bearing consolation and cheer unto all with whom he came in contact, yet in preaching and debate he could rise to somewhat of an Apollos in might and eloquence. The main grounds of his success, however, lay in his remarkable discretion, his eminent goodness, and his rare fidelity. At the very outset of his ministry he devised a plan to get rid of the half-way covenant, without any jar, and with good effect, though to it the church had tenaciously clung for 90 years, and that, too, when neighboring churches had dropped it long before. He also secured some slight changes in the covenant, thereby giving it such excellence that for 110 years no one has attempted its improvement. Rev. Worthington Wright was settled as his colleague in 1811, but in consequence of some disease of the eyes, preventing study, he was dismissed at his own request early in 1813. Mr. Benedict's pastorate, like that of his predecessors, was long, prosperous, and peaceful, until near its close, when an unpleasant controversy arose about locating the third and present edifice. He received 272 to the church, baptized 758, and ordained eight deacons. He retained the confidence and affection of his people until his death in 1813, at 76 years of age, and the 53d of his ministry. Here and there an aged one in the parish and vicinity has a pleasant remembrance of his person and work, and through them his influence gleams gently out on the present generation, as the sun's rays gleam upon the sky after his setting.

And here, in passing, I would call attention to the fact that the united pastorates of the three first ministers of this church covered the remarkable period of 143 years, probably the only instance in the country, and one alike creditable to both parties. Fortunate as this ancient church may be in the future, there is now little prospect that it will ever have a pastor who, in this respect, will attain unto either of the first three. After a year's vacancy, Rev. Henry P. Strong, of Salisbury, was settled over the church in May, 1814, and was dismissed in January, 1816. Rev. Samuel R. Andrew, of Milford, became his successor in October, 1817. From Mr. Benedict's death to *his* settlement, the church had received 38 additions. The party too, disaffected by the location of the new church edifice, had withdrawn and formed themselves into a strict Congregational church. He entered upon his work with forecast and tact, and prosecuted it with earnestness and efficiency. Over his rich endowments and fine culture there was cast a kind, devout, loving spirit which gave him great power as a preacher and pastor. So exemplary was he in his daily walk and conversation, that a quaint and captious neighbor once said that, "He had watched him for 25 years to find something inconsistent with his profession, but must give it up." This speaks volumes as to his discreetness and piety. Hence, no wonder that the church was united and successful under his care. He was blessed with three revivals, received 263, baptized 243, and ordained three deacons. Finding his health failing he resigned, and was dismissed in 1846, about 29 years from his settlement. He removed to New Haven, where he died, May, 26th, 1858, at the age of 71. Rev. Lucius Curtis, of Torrington, was immediately installed as Mr. Andrew's successor in July, 1846, and was dismissed in 1854, at his own request. He led the church forward, adding 80 to its membership, baptizing 36, and leaving it harmonious and hopeful. In April of the ensuing year, Rev. Robert G. Williams was installed, and remained until July, 1859. In 1857, the second year of his ministry, some \$4000 were expended in modernizing and improving this church edifice. He also received 32 persons into this visible fold of Christ. Rev. Charles E. Robinson began to supply the pulpit early in 1861, and was ordained pastor, in June, 1862. He received 17 to the church, and was dismissed at his own request, in the spring of 1864. Rev. Charles Little began to supply the pulpit in 1865,

and after two years retired, having added 30 to the church. Rev. Horace Winslow, as his successor, supplied the pulpit one year, and added to the church 24. In vacancies from time to time 10 persons were added. Rev. Gurdon W. Noyes, of Stonington, the ninth and present pastor, began his work, on November 14th, 1869, and was installed on the 8th of December following. He has received 6 to the church. From its origin, this church has received into its fold 1526; placed the seal of the covenant upon 2999, and ordained 23 deacons, only three of whom survive. Its present membership is 192. Six churches have been formed entirely out of it, and two others have received a goodly number of members from it, to say nothing of its contributions to other denominations within its ancient limits, and to the churches of its own faith in the cities of the East and West. From it have sprung 13 ministers, seven by the name of Judson, one the father of Adoniram, the pioneer missionary, and another, Philo, distinguished as a revivalist. It has also been favored with a line of deacons of such rare worth and long continuance in office, as to deserve a passing notice.

Hon. John Minor, the pioneer, who at the first view of this place from Goodhill, with bended knee, craved heaven's blessing upon the little company, and asked for a godly posterity, was in office 49 years, and seven of his descendants filled it after him, the last dying in 1865. Of these, Matthew and Truman (the last one) were distinguished for Bible knowledge, piety and usefulness. The first was in office 42 years, and several of the others of like merit were in office from 25 to 45 years; and one, Eli Summers, still remains with us who has been in office 40 years. To the wise effort, bright example, fervent prayers, of these men, the church is greatly indebted for its unity, stability and success. Society has received more marvelous modifications in these two centuries than in any other two since the Christian era. In this period, printing, steam, machinery, electricity, have been exerting their magic and civilizing power. In this period, too, gradually, indeed, church edifices have improved in style and comfort. Square pews, eagle-nest pulpits, with sounding boards, have disappeared. The worshipers rent their seats, and are not seated as formerly, according to age and rank. The cold, humid air, which our fathers and mothers endured for hours is rarified by the heat of stove or fur-

nace. About the sanctuary no Sabbath-day houses appear; and instead of coming to church on foot, or upon saddles or pillions, as of old, the people now come in spring wagons or covered carriages. And then at its origin, this church was one of 18 in the Connecticut colonies. Now there are 290 in the State, and 3043 in the United States, with other evangelical denominations as strong or stronger. Then a few hundred colonists were struggling for a foothold in this wilderness, against the rigors of the climate, the assaults of savages and the interferences of the mother country. Now, there are 37 States scattered over a vast and fertile area, with some forty-five millions of inhabitants, under one free and beneficent government, and with almost every conceivable facility for material, intellectual and spiritual advantage. With few helps and many hindrances, our ancestors kept the flame of worship burning on the altars of this Zion. Though the church has been weakened by wars, wasted by pestilence, thinned by emigration, endangered by prosperity, yet it still lives and in much vigor. It is a glorious thing that it has thus held right on its way through ten generations. It has rendered acceptable service to its Head and Lord, and been a rich boon to this community.

And now, how interesting this transitional point when it is to pass over its great legacy of good to the keeping of another series of generations. Our fathers *cast up stepping-stones for our advancement; not arhors wherein to take our ease.* We may well *glory in their work;* but if *we rest upon it, the Lord will raise up children to them from the stones of the street.* We should rather feel that the church is to go forward in numbers, beauty, achievement, influence.

As we leave this cycle of years, lined with Christian heroes and heroines behind us, we must needs cast the horoscope of the future. We who gladly join in this jubilee, will, ere long, pass away; but others will take our places, and the tide of affairs will sweep on. When the next century comes round, and posterity gathers for commemoration, what shall be the aspect of the place, and the character of the people? We can decide with certainty, as to some things that will greet our descendants then, as they do us now. They will be hailed by the same spring, with its birds and flowers. They will pass up the same broad and shaded street, and look out upon the same gem of a valley, with

its picturesque setting of hills. The rude monument of Pomeraug will remain and will be visited by the curious, as to-day. But will the people be wiser, better, happier? Will most of them be in Christ's visible fold, as burning and shining lights? Christian friends, the answer to these queries depends largely upon us. Our faith, zeal, fidelity, with heaven's favor, may fill the lips of posterity with glad hosannas at the tri-centennial. Gazing backward, I seem to see the great cloud of witnesses for Jesus here clasping hands along the flying years, and as they pass on, the blessed results of their sacrifices, toils and tears, I seem to hear them say: "Freely ye have received, freely give." "Take the triumphs we have gained to cheer you; gaze upon the trophies we have gathered and hung around you, then press forward from conquest to conquest, until called to lay your armor down, and receive the Master's well-done." *Amen.*

The concluding prayer was uttered by Rev. John Churchill, and after this a recess of five minutes occurred to give opportunity for such as chose to retire.

During the services of the forenoon, the deacons of the mother church, our own, and those of the North church, sat about the communion table after the manner of "ye olden time." After the recess came the administration of the Lord's supper to some 800 communicants, filling the seats above and below, Rev. William K. Hall, of Stratford, and our own pastor officiating. It was a solemn and interesting occasion—never before enjoyed here—never again to be enjoyed by us below,—when a mother church, with its own mother and six children sat down together at the "Earthly marriage feast of the Lamb." The remembrances of that hour will go with us through the eternal ages.

The exercises at the communion were opened by singing the following verses, beautifully rendered by William Cothren, James H. Linsley, Mrs. Enos Benham, and Mrs. Horace D. Curtiss, as a quartette:

"Tis midnight, and on Olive's brow,
The star is dimmed that lately shone;
"Tis midnight; in the garden now,
The suffering Saviour prays alone.

* * * * * *

" "Tis finished,"—so the Saviour cried,
And meekly bowed his head, and died;
" "Tis finished,"—yes the race is run,
The battle fought, the victory won!

ADDRESS AT COMMUNION.

FATHERS, BRETHREN, FRIENDS:—We approach this sacramental table to-day under circumstances of peculiar interest. The “communion of saints” is changed from a dry dogma of our creed into a blessed reality of our experience. The mother church sits down in this heavenly place in Christ Jesus, with her daughter, granddaughters, cousins, and many of remoter kindred and others of different denominations. No idea of the Church in the Bible is more common or beautiful than that of a family or household. God is the Father, Jesus the elder brother, and all true believers, brothers and sisters in Him. The Savior once said that whosoever should do his will, the same was his brother, sister and mother. And Paul gathers into one family the redeemed on earth and in heaven. Ah! the hundreds who have preceded us in caring for this Zion, must be near to-day in sympathy and gratulation, though we feel not the pressure of their hands, and hear no word of cheer from their lips. And through the knowledge we have of their career and of their blest estate in glory, we can commune with them, and gather inspiration to press on in our Christian course. Friends, our time for holy fellowship and achievement here is fast passing by. The Lord help us to go down from this mount of glorious privilege with a fuller consecration to his service. Then, when called to rest from our earthly labors and cares, we shall be numbered among those who die in the Lord, and *whose works follow them!*

The service was continued by Rev. William K. Hall, in the following remarks:

BRETHREN IN CHRIST:—Our thought has been directed to that blessed truth of the unity of all believers in Christ, of the family relation in which all who are Christ’s are found, a relation which death itself cannot sever.

This truth is made most vivid and real to us by this Supper of our Lord, and by these memories of our fathers, which as a sisterhood of churches we have come together to-day to revive. We love to contemplate this truth. It produces a deep, quiet joyousness of spirit, thus to keenly realize that we are one with those who have gone before us to the home above, one with that godly

ancestry who planted these churches of Christ and bequeathed to us these religious institutions. There is, it is true, this invisible, indestructible unity.

But what does this imply? That we have the same faith, the faith "once delivered to the saints," that we are sustained by the same hopes and the same promises? Most surely; but is there not more than this? There is a unity of the spirit, a spirit of devotion to the truth, a spirit of consecration to the Master and His service. Through much self-denial, through much self-sacrifice, they labored to secure for themselves and for those that should come after them, these blessings of the Christian family and the Christian state. Fidelity to the truth, a firm, unyielding devotion to the interests of religion among them, marked their character and their lives. We may not, my brethren, be called to practise the same kind of self-denial, and may not find the same kind of sacrifices in our path of duty, but if we are true, devoted Christian men and women, loyal to the Master and His kingdom, we shall find that we need the same spirit that actuated them, and we shall moreover find that our path of duty is the path of self-denial and self-sacrifice. That teaching of the Savior, which was in so large a measure exemplified in their lives, is for us also. "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. For whosoever will save his life, shall lose it; and whosoever will lose his life for My sake, shall save it." This supper which calls to remembrance the sacrifice of our Lord, His self-giving for us, ever brings to mind afresh that root-principle of all Christian living, self-giving for Christ, self-losing in Christ. We are here brought into communion with Him. Shall not this communion bring us into a closer sympathy with His spirit? Shall we not, by this communion, possess more of the mind of our Lord? As we take this cup to our lips, and by faith behold the blood that was shed for us, shall we not take into our hearts more of Christ that we may take into our lives more of Christ? If we here renew our covenant vows, let us remember that these vows are vows of allegiance, by which we devoted ourselves and our all to the service of Christ. If we here re-consecrate ourselves to Jesus, let us recognize the truth, that it is a consecration to the cross—that the cross is to be henceforth more deeply im-

printed in our souls, and that we are to bear it more steadfastly and faithfully in our lives.

May we all to-day be so baptized by the Holy Spirit into the spirit of the Lord Jesus, that "denying ungodliness and worldly lusts," we may "live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world; looking for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the Great God and our Savior Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us that He might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works."

It was now "high noon," and the final hymn being sung, the "great congregation" moved to the Town Hall to partake of the collation, which had been prepared by the church and congregation, aided by the voluntary and acceptable contribution of eatables and assistance from the ladies of the North Church, and the churches of Judea and Roxbury. We shall not soon forget their kindness, and shall be only too happy to assist them on any similar occasion. All were amply supplied, and when all were "filled" there were "many baskets full taken up."

At 12-45 P. M., the bell gave warning of the services at the cemetery, where the Fathers' monument was to be dedicated. This is a structure hewn from native boulders, of massive proportions, 33 feet high, erected at a cost of more than \$1,500, more than one-third of which was contributed by a single individual. There is no similar monument in this country so far as known to the writer. The principal stone is a granite block of great beauty, found on a farm at a distance, and prepared for the place of honor on the base of the monument. On the front it bears the inscription in prominent letters, "Presented by William Cothren and Lyman E. Monrijie, July 4th, 1861." This inscription refers to the block, and not, as some supposed, to the entire monument. Just above on a brown stone block are the names of the gentlemen at whose expense the monument has been erected. The inscription is, "Erected in honor of the Fathers, by Rev. W. T. Bacon, Hon. Thomas Bull, David S. Bull, Esq., George H. Clark, Esq., Hon. Julius B. Curtiss, Hon. Henry C. Deming, Hon. Henry Dutton, Charles G. Judson, Esq., Woodbury Lyceum, Walter P. Marshall, Rev. Benjamin C. Meigs, Deacon Truman Minor, Rev. George Richards, Rev. James Richards, D. D., Hon. Thomas H. Seymour, Edward W. Seymour, Rev. Henry B. Sherman, Rev. Thomas L.

Shipman, Hon. Nathaniel B. Smith, Charles A. Somers, Esq., Hon. Henry Stoddard, Rev. J. B. Stoddard, Rev. Robert G. Williams, Gen. William T. Sherman." On the shaft above is the name, David J. Stiles. On the east side is the inscription "Rev. Zechariah Walker, first pastor of ancient Woodbury, died Jan. 20th, 1699, in the 63d year of his age, and in the 36th of his ministry." At the foot of the monument is the ancient headstone with this record:

ZECCHARIAH
WALKER,
AGED 63,
DYED JAN. 20
1699.

On the north side is the epitaph of Rev. Anthony Stoddard, the second pastor, who died Sept. 6th, 1760, in the 83d year of his age, and the 61st of his ministry; and on the west side is that of Rev. Noah Benedict, the third pastor, who died April 20th, 1813, in the 76th year of his age, and the 53d of his ministry. At the base, on the north side, is an old mill-stone, one of two small ones taken to Woodbury on horseback, two hundred years ago, with which they ground corn and meal for the whole settlement at the rate of one bushel per day.

The dedicatory exercises were very interesting and impressive. Rev. Thomas L. Shipman, of Jewett City, one of the contributors, opened the exercises with the following

DEDICATORY PRAYER.

O Thou, whose we are, and whom we would glorify in all our works begun, continued and ended; may Thy presence be with us and Thy blessing upon us on the occasion which has convened us in this place of graves. Thy servants have erected this monument before which we are assembled, to the memory of the forefathers of the ancient church whose history we have to-day recalled. Accept Thou this work of their hands and offering of their hearts. May this shaft long stand in remembrance of the men whose names are engraven upon it—though dead, they yet live by the influence of their ministry upon coming generations. Time may efface their names from this monument of stone, but nothing shall ever efface

their memory from the hearts of a grateful posterity. As we stand surrounded by the dead, impress upon our minds the thought that we shall soon be of them, and give us grace so to live and so to die, that to each of us the end of earth shall be the beginning of Heaven. Bless those who are to take part in the further services of this occasion. May what they shall speak be for Thy glory and for our good, and in all the solemnities and services of the day, may we be accepted through Jesus Christ our strength and our Redeemer. *Amen.*

ADDRESS OF DEDICATION.

BY WILLIAM COHREN.

Ten years ago, as the curious antiquarian searched with reverent tread among the mossy mounds, which surround us, on this consecrated hill, "beautiful for situation," in this loveliest of valleys, parting here and there the lank grass and tangled briars, he would have discovered *that* little head-stone of native rock with its rude inscription, telling us the simple tale, that here rested all that remained on earth of the first father of the town, "ye faithfull, worthy, beloved Minister of the Gospell, and much lamented pastor of the Ch^b of Christ." One hundred and sixty times had the "dark brown years" passed over this consecrated spot, and this was all that remained to tell the numerous posterity of the fathers, who had been enriched and blessed during all that long period by his faithful teachings, labors and sufferings—that here the ever-to-be-revered Walker had laid his armor down—that here he awaited in tranquil rest the final trump of God. Then, as now, grouped thickly around him, in like noteless graves, his faithful people were gathered—a hardy, noble race, that has, in the last two centuries, and especially in the living, whirling present, brought forth great and abundant fruit. *There* lies Deacon John Minor, the tried, the true, and the brave, ancestor, in the maternal line, of Gen. Grant, President of the United States. Connecticut, through her Deacon Grant of Windsor, and Deacon Minor of Woodbury, claims a proud share in the fame of this distinguished man. Near Deacon Minor reposes all that was mortal of Deacon

John Sherman, ancestor of the General of our armies, and Senator Sherman of Ohio. Gen. Sherman's name appears on this monument as great-grand-son of the immortal Stoddard, second pastor of this ancient church. The Mitchells, the Wheelers, the Curtisses, the Hurs, the Judsons—ministerial race—all the early revered names lie slumbering near, a goodly company, in their lonely, neglected graves—alas! too long neglected by their numerous descendants. Before me stands at this very moment so great a company of the lineal descendants of the first John Minor, deacon of the church, captain of the train band, interpreter to the Indians and justice of the quorum, that by contributing a mere trifle apiece, a greater and more expensive monument could be erected than this, which we now dedicate to the memory of the fathers. I charge you to-day to take immediate measures to erect a monument fit to commemorate the virtues of one of the most remarkable men in the early history of the colony. It is the duty of the hour for you.

No nobler company of men ever removed in a body into the solitudes and dangers of the wilderness, than these early fathers, who left their dwellings by the sea, to dare the perils and privations of the dim woods. They sought to plant here a pure and sublime faith. They labored to extend the kingdom of God. Is it wonderful, then, that their descendants should desire to erect an enduring monument to the sacred memory of such immortal ancestors, that it may stand forever as a remembrancer to their children to imitate the virtues and graces of their long buried sires, who have “entered into the rest that remaineth to the people of God?”

A little farther to the north stands the modest and dilapidated head-stone of the venerated Anthony Stoddard, second pastor of the church, who rests in the hope of a bright resurrection amid the faithful flock to whom he ministered in “things spiritual” for the long period of more than sixty years. A step farther, and we are at the grave of the sainted Benedict. These three, a trio of worthies, full of prudence, piety and purity unsurpassed, “went in and out before the people” for the long period of one hundred and forty-three years. Such were our fathers, and such their claims on the reverence and the affections of their posterity, and yet no monument had arisen to perpetuate a remembrance of their virtues—ten years ago!

But the filial heart of the people could not endure a farther neglect of the reverence due the names of their sacred dead. Measures were taken for erecting a fitting monument to their memory. Starting with the theory that no material could be more fitting than the rugged native boulders from *their own lands*, among which they had wandered in life, the work went on with zeal. Good progress had been made, when the war of the rebellion broke out, and for more than seven dark, gloomy and bloody years, the work was suspended. In 1868, noble men came forward with their contributions, at home and abroad, and the work was commenced again with renewed vigor, and pushed to successful completion. It now stands before you, a rugged structure, 33 feet in height. It is like the character of our fathers, not artistically beautiful, but massive and immovable. It was erected at an expense of more than \$1,500—and more than one-third of that amount was contributed by one individual.

A single duty yet remains, and we are here to perform it. We are here, a filial band, to dedicate it to the memory of the fathers. We come to this pleasing duty amid the joyous exercises of our bi-centennial jubilee, and in the two hundred and fiftieth year of Congregationalism in this country. The time is propitious. The skies are bright above us. The awakening vigor of Spring is apparent on every side. It is the fourth jubilee of our church, and the fifth of our order. And now, in such an auspicious hour, when our hearts are filled with joy and congratulations, we dedicate this monument to the memory of the fathers—to the memory of the noble men and women who lie sleeping in the moss-grown graves beneath our feet, resting sweetly and securely in the hope of a blessed immortality in the beautiful land beyond the far ethereal blue, “where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest.” We dedicate it to the memory of that pilgrim company, who left the father-land for the enjoyment of a purer gospel—who chose to endure all the privations of a pioneer life amid the perils of the wilderness, to establish freedom of thought for themselves and their children. We dedicate it to the heroic men, who could *sing* “amidst the storm,”

“ And whom the stars heard and the sea !
While the sounding aisles of the dim woods rang
To the anthems of the free !”

We cheerfully dedicate it to the fathers who chose this beautiful resting-place, so like that of the Pilgrim Fathers at Plymouth Rock, pioneers and partakers in a like faith, and a like appreciation of the beautiful in nature. We dedicate it to those lion-hearted men, who have left us a glorious inheritance—who, while

“The heavy night hung dark
The woods and waters o'er,”

and often over their dearest hopes, still sang the songs of Zion,

And prayed in their Bethel, the shade of the Rock.

We dedicate it with full souls on this

“Holy ground,
The spot where first they trod!
They have left unstained what here they found,
Freedom to worship God.”

We dedicate it to them for their toils and labors for the establishment of “the faith once delivered to the saints,” for their pure lives, for their earnest zeal, for their pious teachings, for their shining examples. We dedicate it as a sacred memento of them—as a solemn duty to ourselves. We dedicate it, that our children and children’s children may learn to follow in the way of the holy dead. We dedicate it, that it may be “a rule unto ourselves,” inviting us to pursue “the things that make for peace,” and pleasantness, so that when we shall have entered into our rest, and another century shall have rolled its ceaseless round, our descendants may revere our memory as we do that of the fathers so long ago translated.

Spirits of our fathers, long since ascended unto glory at the right hand of God! Spirits of the just made perfect! Do you hear us in your blest abodes on high? Do you note our filial aspirations to-day? Are you hovering over us as our guardian angels? Tell us not that when good men carried your bodies to the burial, and wept over these graves, you knew not, heeded not—the tears of affection! Are you pleased with our tribute of love? Are you not smiling upon us this very hour, soothing our spirits, as we offer to you this memorial our hands have made, and

lift to you our filial hearts ? Were you ever, while here below, afflicted with trivial contests and bitter recriminations—or, rather, did not your great hearts always glow with love and kindness to all ? Do you look in pity upon us, when discord arises, and brethren disagree ? Do you love us in your far-away paradise ? Oh ! we believe, yes—we believe in the beautiful doctrine of guardian angels ! “ In heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father ! ”

“ You’re with us yet, ye holy dead !
By a thousand signs we know !
You’re keeping e’er a spirit watch
O’er those we love below !

Next followed the Dedicatory Poem, of which the following is a copy, with slight omissions :

THE EARLY VILLAGE FATHERS.

As I sat in my study one eve, grim and grum,
Came a rap at the door :
“ Is the poet at home ? ”
“ Well sir, what is wanted ? ”
“ Why, one Cothren is here,
And he says he wants brains.”
“ Ah, how doth that appear ?
That a lawyer *lacks* brains, is what often may be,
Though I had not supposed that such lawyer was he.”
“ Nay, ‘tis *your* brains he wants.”
“ Ah, that alters the case—”
Hence I stand here to-day in this reverend place,

* * * * * * *

Ab, Home, search the world round, go east and go west,
Take all that is purest and sweetest and best ;
Take the world’s wealth, its grandeur, it’s strength, and it’s fame,
And, if other good is, fling in all ye can name ;
For one hour in that spot, one glad thrill of the boy,
We would willingly give all the world calls it’s joy.

* * * * * * *

“ What shadows we are, and what shadows pursue,”
Just go back forty years, let them pass in review ;

Scaree one family's head, that stood here in its worth,
 But the last forty years have consigned to the earth ;
 Our homes have changed owners, our farms too, till now
 Scaree one gray head ye meet of that *brief* long ago.

Take one fact to this point. Just go back *eighty* years,
 What a power was that name which the singer now bears ?
 What a wealth of wide acres ? What strange business skill ?
 Each thing that he touched, changed to gold at his will ;
 'T would take ten modern men to make up his *one* mind,
 Half the wealth of the town was in his name combined.
 —Searce two years since this hand signed the deed, that conveyed
 The last foot of land that great name once obeyed.

Yes, what shadows we are, and what shadows pursue,
 We stand here to-day with the fathers in view—
 The far-away fathers, and pastors, who led
 Their flocks round these hills, on these pastures to feed ;
 Guarded well each approach, kept the fold from all harins,
 And, like Christ of old time, “ bore the lambs in their arms.”

We stand on their ashes ! methinks as we gaze,
 That they rise up !—confront us !—and ask of our ways !
 There was WALKER, the gentle and meek—yet the shrewd,
 There was STODDARD, the austere and phain—yet the good ;
 There was BENEDECT, solemn and slow, with an eye
 That looked out like a star from its cavernous sky ;
 And a crowd of bright worthies hover thick in their rear,
 And all gaze, with bowed forms, on this pageantry here !

Is it nothing to stand on the graves of *such* men ?
 Come no thoughts up ? no pictures of scenes stirring then ?
 Come no voices, loud ringing in every ear,
 To tell us of life, throbbing life that was here ?
 Come no shadows, that fall down on every path
 God appoints for each soul, in his love, or his wrath ?
 Aye, and fancy finds pastime in seenes such as these,
 And weaves into voicie what she hears, or she sees.

* * * * * + * * * + *
 'Tis a beautiful part, as we stand here to-day,
 And our thoughts travel off to that dim far away,
 To call up that scene, and those forms, and those eyes,
 That once looked around here on this new Paradise !

There was reverend age with its locks white and thin,
 There was beautiful childhood, unsullied by sin,

There was vigorous manhood so stalwart and bold,
There were beautiful maidens so sweet to behold ;
And they had all those cares, and those dreams, too, perchance,
That light up the world with the hues of romance.

There were some sad eyes there, that the hot tears had burned,
There were pale, gentle faces, whose hearts were in-urned ;
There were souls with dead hopes, that, still withering cling
Round the heart they had broke, and then left with their sting ;
And other eyes there, with no smile any more,
Unless faith brought it down from that sunnier shore.

Yet a beautiful faith, that they brought here that day,
They came not for gold, let men say what they may ;
They came not for power for no power was there here,
Save the power of meek patience, that dwells in a tear ;
But they came with their souls, to this far-away wood,
To work out an *approach* to the all-perfect Good !
Have we, their descendants, departed from them ?
Can we now, as they could, the world's currents stem ?
Can we, as could they, break off that bond and this,
And alone rest the heart where its true treasure is !

As we stand on their dust, let our hearts go once more,
To that far away land, to that far away shore ;
Let us try to draw down into each throbbing breast,
One tithe of that worth that the fathers possessed ;
And transmit to our children, till earth cease to move,
Their courage, their patience, their sweetness, their love !

Then followed the

DEDICATION HYMN.

—
BY WILLIAM COTHREN.

We're standing to-day on the holy sod—
With reverence draw near—
Whence our fathers' souls ascended to God—
Their sacred dust lies here.

CHORUS—Many are the years since ye hasted away,
Eager for the golden strand ;
Many are the voices calling you to-day
To hear our filial Band.
Hear us alway, hear us alway,
Hear us in your happy land.

Ye are happy to-day in your home above,
Your hearts are all aglow;
Ye are smiling now with a look of love,
On us who toil below.

CHORUS—

We greet you to-day, ye sturdy old stock,
Who rest from your labors here—
From your prayers and praise at the Bethel Rock,
To shine in a brighter sphere.

CHORUS—

This hymn was sung as a quartette by Messrs. William Cothren, James H. Linsley, William A. Gordon, and William B. Walker, in a most effective and beautiful manner.

The exercises closed with a Benediction by Rev. Austin Isham of Roxbury.

At a quarter to 2 P. M., the bell called to the afternoon exercises. These were of a social character. Hon. N. B. Smith, grandson of the third pastor, the Rev. Noah Benedict, who had presided at the monument, also presided here, ably aided by the pastor, and Deacon Trowbridge, Chairman of the General Committee, acting as Vice-Presidents.

After singing, the Opening Prayer was made by Rev. Austin Isham:—

Almighty God, our Heavenly Father, hallowed be Thy name, Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is done in Heaven. We hear Thy voice speaking to us on this deeply interesting occasion, saying “Seek ye My face.” May all our hearts respond, “Thy face, Lord, will we seek”

We would approach Thy throne of grace with profound reverence and deep humility. When we consider the greatness of Thy majesty, and our own exceeding great vileness and unworthiness, we are led to exclaim “What is man that Thou art mindful of him, or the son of man, that Thou visitest him?”

We feel that we have forfeited every claim to Thy favor and justly merit Thy displeasure. And yet, Thou hast not dealt with us according to our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities; but as high as the Heavens are above the earth, so great has been Thy mercy toward us. We humbly thank Thee for all Thou

hast done for our guilty and ruined race; especially that Thou didst so love the world, as to give thine own and well-beloved Son, that whosoever believeth in Him, should not perish, but have everlasting life. We thank Thee for the many blessings, temporal and spiritual, which thou hast conferred upon us. The lines have indeed fallen to us in pleasant places, yea, we have a goodly heritage. We feel that it is a goodly land which the Lord our God hath given us. We bless Thee for a godly ancestry, whose steps Thou didst guide to these beautiful hills and valleys, and that here, by Thy blessing, they planted those institutions, civil and religious, which we to-day enjoy.

We render thanks to Thee for extending Thy fostering care to the churches our fathers planted; that Thou didst greatly increase the number and moral power and strength of these churches; thus showing to us how precious in Thy sight is Zion, dear as the apple of Thine eye, and graven on the palms of Thy hands. O Thou great head of the Church, we pray for Thy blessing still. God of our fathers, we beseech Thee never to leave nor forsake these churches. Be as a wall of fire round about them and a glory in the midst of them. Pour out Thy spirit upon them; may they be indeed the light of the world and the salt of the earth. Give them pastors after Thine own heart.

Bless the churches throughout the land and throughout the world.

Finally, we invoke Thy blessing upon all the exercises now before us. In all that may be said or done, may Thy glory and our spiritual good be promoted. We ask and offer all in the name and for the sake of Christ, to whom, with the Father and Holy Spirit, be rendered ceaseless praises. *Amen.*

By special invitation, Rev. Horace Winslow, of Willimantic, Conn., the last preceding pastor of the church, next gave the address of greeting to the assembled churches, and continued during the afternoon to read the sentiments addressed to the churches, which had been prepared by Bro. William Cothren, and to introduce the speakers in response thereto, in an exceedingly happy, entertaining and eloquent manner:

MR. PRESIDENT, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

In the name of this Church, I am requested to welcome with joyful greeting, her Daughters, with their Grandmother, (who is fresh and fair, as one who has not passed the marketable age of twenty-five), to a home gathering here to-day.

To these many children, with their children's children, I may say: Your Mother is not young, and still those who do not know her age might think so, for she is hale and hearty, elastic of step, and buoyant of heart, as a girl of sixteen. If you would observe, you can see that her "eye is not dim, and her natural force abated;" that in her voice, dress, and bearing, she has all the appearance of youth,—and yet she is two hundred years old to-day. Indeed, a simple consideration of the fact of her numerous family, would suggest the thought that she does not belong to the present generation. I may not be able to state just what it is which has kept her so fresh and fair, for she has not been sleeping for two centuries, nor half of them. She has been a personal actor in all the great and interesting events which have transpired in our country during this long period. She was in the field, boldly defending the frontier, in King Philip's war, giving her sons full to the quota all through the French and Indian war, and she was among the foremost of the forward in the grand struggle which achieved the American nationality. The sons of Woodbury marched to glory and to victory under the leadership of Wolfe, Putnam, and Washington. And the fact that there is an occasion for it, and that there is a will to erect here a monument to the memory of the heroes who fell in the national defense and the crushing out of the great rebellion, is proof that your Mother has not been asleep for these years, but awake, and loyal to all the great interests of humanity.

She has also kept up with the times. She is as much at home in the progress of the age, as any of her children's children. She holds to those fundamental truths which made her grand old Puritan ancestry illustrious, and their fame immortal, but she believes in progress. She knows that the world moves, and she moves with it, without the help of a railroad.

It is because of this hearty sympathy with the present, not mourning over the dead past, but rejoicing in the grand march of to-day, that she takes a peculiar pleasure in this family gathering.

She is rejoiced to meet her children, who have long been of age, and have made their mark in the field of thought and action, and with reminiscences of the past, talk over the affairs of to-day.

We stand in a grand period of the world's history. We behold here a nation grown to vigorous manhood,—developed in all noble qualities,—at once respected and feared by the governments of the world, and loved by all peoples whose hearts are in accord with the interests of humanity. We see here the fruits of those vital principles of Christianity and rights of man, which our Puritan ancestors held and taught, and to realize which, in a social state, they left their pleasant homes in the old world, and began in this wilderness of the west, to build, from the foundations, a free church and a free state.

For these noble deeds we honor those men. But we stand in no stagnant past. We look forward and upward, and are particularly joyful to-day in the wasting away of hoary wrongs,—in the advance upon public opinion of broad Christian doctrines of human equality and human rights, and in the hold which the Gospel has upon all earnest minds of our day.

Thus cherishing, with you, a common sympathy with these vital interests, the Church here delights to honor her Bi-Centennial Anniversary by this gathering. It is with a hearty good will that she welcomes you to your birth-place—your early pleasant home in this green valley. And it is a special occasion of joy to us all that we can have with us the venerated Grandmother. She is very old, and yet we should know it only by her title. Her *residence* is on the sea shore, and in former years, fishing, I conclude, was an occupation with her. However, judging from her present elegant home, surrounded with the adornments which wealth and art furnish, that business must be given up, but by way of amusement she now and then puts her hand in, and takes a good *Hall*, as you will see in the reply to the sentiment which I will read :

STRATFORD!—Mother revered! thou that dwellest by the sea! called in a green old age to celebrate the birth-day of this, thy first born daughter, with filial reverence and great joy, we greet thee, and weleome thee to the goodly heritage which the Lord our God has given us!

Response by Rev. Wm. K. HALL, of Stratford.

MR. CHAIRMAN AND FRIENDS:

Such a venerable parent, with such a numerous and honored posterity, would seem to demand a more venerable person than myself to represent her upon this occasion. The incongruity was certainly apparent, even before those humorous references with which my friend has been pleased to introduce me, were made. Appreciating the difficulty of performing such a *rôle*, I have been endeavoring, as best I could, to accumulate and appropriate to myself such a stock of the past, as at least to feel old. I have been attempting, under the influence of these suggestive emblems and insignia with which these walls and panels are decorated, to forget the present, and to throw myself back into the past. This, however, were comparatively easy to the task of arousing those feelings of self-pride and self-exaltation, which they are expected to have, and which they are wont to have, who are privileged in their green old age to celebrate the birth-day of their first born daughter, honored and blessed, and surrounded by a happy family of her own. This effort to feel like a dear old grandma, whose heart swells with joyous pride, and overflows with gratitude, and whose tongue is garrulous, as she recounts the virtues and honors of the family, is altogether too much for me. Just this, however, the sentiment proposed expects of me. Even your Committee of Arrangements, kindly considering the failings of old dames thus happily, and taking for granted that my own pleasure upon this occasion would be found largely in exercising the right to be loquacious, accorded me the privilege of occupying all the time I might desire, not limiting me, as in the case of the children, to ten minutes.

But I promise not to go beyond the stated limit, if in your indulgence you will pardon me if I do not succeed in toning up my youthful feelings to the high pitch of this poetic sentiment.

The historical sermon and address, to which we have with so much pleasure listened, have given us what are supposed to be the facts concerning the birth of this daughter. Some of you are aware that a slight variance of views exists, relative to the causes which led to the formation of this Church, and the colonization of this town of Woodbury. Not particularly interested myself in antiquarian pursuits, I have never been disposed to make a critical investigation of the subject. But if the family record is correct—

that, I mean, which we keep at home—there is a somewhat different explanation to be given, from that which we have heard to-day. It appears that the daughter, dissatisfied with the way affairs were conducted in the household determined to have them according to her mind. The mother did not propose to yield to the revolutionary spirit of her rebellious child. And as the child inherited the disposition of the mother, each persistent and unyielding in its own views of what was right and best, the prospects of an amicable life together beneath the same old roof seemed exceedingly doubtful. At this juncture a young man appeared, who succeeded in winning the heart, and as a natural consequence sought to possess the hand of this daughter. Matters became complicated. Councils of friends were summoned to give advice. Even the interference of the civil authorities was invoked. These were warm times. But what was to be done? The troubles came to an end in this way: the young man, whom the mother could not and would not abide, succeeded in obtaining the hand of the daughter, and then, as we might suppose from his very name, if for no other reason, *walked off* with her. This play upon the name *Walker* recalls a story that is still current in the old home, and I may be permitted to drop, for the moment, the thread of my story, to repeat it, after the habit of loquacious old ladies.

Those old controversies were carried on, not without considerable bitterness. The General Court had interfered to adjust the matters of dispute between the two Church parties. It decided that the Walker party should have the use of the Meeting House a part of the Lord's Day. Upon one occasion, Mr. Walker had in a sermon made some declarations which Dr. Chauncey had construed as unjust, and as reflecting upon himself. In the afternoon, or upon the next Sabbath, Dr. Chauncey took for his text this passage: "Be sober, be vigilant, because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour." His first point was, "You see, my Brethren, that the devil is a great *walker*."

How much of this is fact, and how much merely legend, or the gossip of the period handed down, much exaggerated, to the present, I cannot say, but it may serve to remind us, what historical facts amply teach, that the ecclesiastical disputes of those days engendered warm party feelings, and rendered absolutely necessary an entire separation.

The daughter, with her chosen spiritual leader and guide, left the old homestead, and in choosing her new home wisely turned northward, preferring the clear, bracing air of the north to the damp and fog and malaria of the shore lands. The record of these two hundred years, and these festivities to-day, testify to the wisdom of that separation and of that choice.

That setting forth from the old home was under circumstances, and amid scenes, which, if we could reproduce them in our imagination to-day, would aid us in rising to the full significance of this occasion. The Plantation was only thirty years old. These years had been years of toil, of hard work in subduing the wilderness, and in making for themselves comfortable homes. They had been spent in almost constant fear of the depredations and attacks of the Indians. One generation was about passing away, and a new generation had already begun to take up and carry on the ever unfinished work. They were just beginning to enjoy the fruits of their hard pioneer toil, were just beginning to realize the benefits of a social life, well ordered, properly systematized as to government, adequately equipped and adjusted by the experiences of those thirty years. Those years had been years chiefly of preparation. The settlement was now assuming the appearance and the character of a thrifty agricultural town. It must have required a resoluteness of purpose, backed by a firm, conscientious regard for duty, for that little band to go forth at such a time, and strike out an entirely new path for themselves, to begin over again that same laborious work of making new homes in these wild woodlands of the north. The prime motives that led them to take that step were wholly of a religious nature. Their rights as church members they would maintain. Spiritual interests must be held paramount. They felt that they could not remain in the old church home, though it was large enough to contain them, if the course they deemed right and scriptural was not pursued, so they left it. They had pluck, nerve and energy—stood their ground firmly until they were convinced that it was for the good of both parties that they should secede. I apprehend that at the last, the spirit that prevailed was not far different from that exhibited in the Patriarch brother, after variances had arisen in the family: “Let there be no strife, I pray, between me and thee, and between my herdsmen and thy herdsmen: for we be brethren. Is not the

whole land before thee: separate thyself I pray thee from me. If thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right, and if thou depart to the right hand then I will go to the left."

Fortunately there was land enough, and that too not far distant from the old home. Could those bold spirits who planned and achieved that work of settlement, whose names shine out upon these tablets before us to-day, see what we of this generation see, could look upon these well tilled, well fenced farms, this attractive thoroughfare, bordered by this cordon of cottage and homestead, indicative all of such comfort, and plenty, and taste, could behold what would be to them of by far greater value, and in their estimate the largest proofs of their success, and the highest earthly reward of their sacrifices and toil, these marks of church life and church progress which have been commensurate with the growth of the outreaching population, they might well believe that the Lord went up with them and before them, and marked out for them the godly heritage which was to be theirs, and their children's.

All honor and praise from us be to that devoted band. The unflinching fidelity to honest convictions, the uncompromising spirit of attachment to what was to them the truth of God, which they exhibited at the sacrifice of so much they held dear, were the rightful issue of the Puritan blood that flowed in their veins. Let us emulate their spirit, and prove ourselves worthy of such a godly ancestry.

The old mother church, whom you have so cordially welcomed to your feast of remembrances and rejoicings to-day, most heartily enters into your spirit of devotion to the fathers, and would, even as yourselves, seek to be animated anew for the work of the Divine Master, for the glory of the Redeemer's kingdom in the earth. May the blessing of the Great Head of the Church rest upon all these Churches represented here, endowing them with a larger measure of the Divine Spirit, whereby they may be more thoroughly consecrated to God and His service.

SOUTHBURY!—First pledge of our affections, and offspring of our heart of hearts, dweller in the fertile plains beside the beautiful river, the Jordan of our ancient inheritance, with maternal joy we greet thee!

Response by Rev. A. B. Smith.

MR. CHAIRMAN:—In responding to the affectionate maternal greeting of this church, we, the eldest offspring, rejoice in being thus welcomed to the home of our childhood on this interesting and joyous occasion, and with true filial affection in connection with our younger sisters, we would to-day seek to gladden the heart of her from whom we had our origin, venerable in her age, on this two hundredth anniversary of her existence, we would render to her all due respect and honor.

It is a joyful occasion where all the scattered children, after years of separation, gather together at the old family home. Such is the occasion we enjoy to-day, and few in these degenerate times can boast a like numerous family. It reminds us of the olden time, when a numerous offspring was counted a blessing, and it was really felt, that “happy is the man that hath his quiver full of them.” I doubt not the joy to-day is in proportion to the number of “olive plants” gathered around the parental table.

But when the scattered members of the family, after long absence, gather at the old home, it is natural that they should review the past, and talk of their varied experiences. The mother is sure to rejoice in the prosperity of all her children, and to grieve over and sympathize with them in all their adversities.

As the oldest of this goodly family, having now attained to the respectable age of 138 years, we have, as has been here hinted, received the fairest natural inheritance of the whole ancestral domain. Our lot has been cast on “the fertile plains, beside the beautiful river, the Jordan of our” venerable mother’s “ancient inheritance”—a land in which Lot himself might have looked with eager, wishful eyes, and chosen in preference to the hill country. But the fertile river bottoms always possess their temptations and their dangers. Though they give promise of an immediate prosperity, and for this reason are often chosen in preference to the hill country, yet they are liable to foster luxury, ease, and consequent idleness, with all their attendant evils, and so tend ultimately to degeneracy. Such locations, therefore, are not usually the most favorable to the progress of true religion, and the spiritual prosperity of the church. As the river flourishes the most luxuriantly in the rocky glens and on the sunny slopes of the hill country, so the church, the vine of God’s own planting, has usually found its greatest prosperity in the rural districts, and

among the hills, where there were few temptations to luxury, ease and indolence. Consequently, our younger sisters among the hills have far outstripped us in numbers, and we have become the smallest and weakest of them all, already showing signs of decrepitude and decay. But as God has hitherto had "a seed to serve Him" in this church of the valley, and many have been trained up under its nurture for a heavenly inheritance, we trust that it will continue to be so in all time to come. The ministry commenced by Graham, the learned Scotch divine of noble birth, and continued by Wildman, the compeer of Bellamy, and by Daniel A. Clark, the great sermonizer, though better preacher than pastor, has been sustained with occasional interruptions to the present time, though latterly on a less settled and permanent foundation. We hope that on a field where so much good seed has been sown, and watered by the tears and prayers of rich, eminent men, a brighter day will ere long dawn, when a new impulse shall be given to everything good in this beautiful valley—where these tendencies to decay shall be arrested, and enterprise, and virtue, and true piety shall be on the increase, and the church shall arise with renewed strength and vigor, and "put on her beautiful garments," and "look forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible" to her enemies "as an army with banners."

BETHLEHEM!—Thou "house of bread," situate like the Bethlehem in the Holy Land, about six miles from *thy* Jerusalem—nurtured, enriched and adorned by Bellamy and Backus—we greet thee, second child of our love!

Response by Rev. GEO. W. BANKS.

MR. CHAIRMAN:—It is exceedingly unfortunate for me that I am not a believer in the doctrine of apostolic succession, for it would be comfortable, to say the least, to have a consciousness of some mysterious power or grace descending to me from my predecessors, which would enable me to do justice to the sentiment and the greeting which have just been offered. But lacking all such power or grace, I must express, as best I am able to you, sir, and through you, to our venerable and venerated brother, the congratulations of the second daughter, the church in Bethlehem. Though more than a century and a quarter have passed since she

left the parental roof, yet I trust that the home instinct is not dead, but that she cherishes and would have expressed to-day, a warm affection for the mother church.

The church in Bethlehem is one hundred and thirty years old to-day. Its beginnings were weak in material things, but strong in faith. Fourteen families living on the hill-tops in "the East part of the North Purchase of Woodbury," finding their six miles' walk to their ancient Jerusalem through winter's storm and summer's heat, inconvenient, determined to have a Mt. Zion of their own, and with a faith and self-sacrifice that we cannot too much admire, this handful of poor but heroic settlers, organized themselves into a church of Christ, and made provision for the permanent support of the gospel ministry among them. When a daughter makes an advantageous settlement in life, the mother's heart is made glad. So, when this daughter on the hills gave her heart to a young man by the name of JOSEPH BELLAMY, the mother church in the valley no doubt rejoiced under Dr. Bellamy's ministry of half a century; "the handful of corn on the top of the mountains began to shake like Lebanon." Its name proved to be no misnomer, for if ever a church received abundance of spiritual food, the church in Bethlehem did, from its first pastor.

Of one, concerning whom so much has been written and so well, it would be impossible for me to speak with justice in the few moments allotted me at this time. I may however briefly allude to the affection he bore to the church over which he was placed. It may serve to set in strong contrast the lack of interest with which the pastoral relation is now viewed by many, and the ease with which it is broken. When Dr. Bellamy was at the zenith of his power as a preacher, being regarded as second only to Jonathan Edwards, and by some of his contemporaries as superior to him in many respects; when his fame had spread all over the country, and even to England, he received a flattering invitation to become the pastor of the 1st Presbyterian Church in New York City. To the Consociation called to advise upon the subject, he addressed the following characteristic letter:

BETHLEHEM, JAN. 25th, 1754.

REVEREND GENTLEMEN:—My people give me salary enough; are very kind, too; I love them, and if it be the will of God I should love to live and die with them. There are many difficult

ties in the way of my going to New York. They are a difficult people; don't like my terms of communion, and some of their great men are against my coming; I am not polite enough for them! I may possibly do to be minister out in the woods, but am not fit for a city. I may die with the small-pox, and leave a widow and fatherless children in a helpless condition. My people will be in danger of ruin. It breaks my heart to think that the interests of religion must sink among my people, and the youth run riot, and the little children be left without an instructor. I humbly desire therefore, nothing may be done without the utmost deliberation; and that whatever advice you shall see fit to give me, you will let me and my people know what grounds you go upon. Behold my life and all the comforts of my life, and my usefulness in the world, and the temporal and eternal interests of my people lie at stake; and you reverend gentlemen, must answer it to God, if you should give me any wrong advice for want of a thorough and most solemn and impartial weighing of the affair. May the infinitely wise God direct you. I pray you to consider me as one of your unworthy brethren, almost overwhelmed with concern, and just ready to sink under the weight of this affair, and quite broken-hearted for my kind and dear people.

JOSEPH BELLAMY.

There exists in his handwriting a memorandum of an imaginary dialogue on the subject of his "declaring" as it was technically called, *i.e.* saying that he felt it his duty to go to New York. Coming at length to the supposition that he *has* "declared," he writes:

"The news flies through the country, and through all New England, and spreads far and wide; and every one has his say—nor are they silent in hell!"

"*Carnal People*—Aha! Aha! Here comes the man that pretended to so much religion! They are all alike—a pack of rogues!"

"*Godly People*—Alas! Alas! What has he done? A dreadful affair! We must give him up, without pretending to vindicate his conduct! Alas for him that was once our guide and friend!"

"*New York*—Aha! Aha! He cares not for his people, nor is moved by their tears, nor touched by their cries and pleadings! He has torn away! Right or wrong, he's resolved to come though his church is ruined! Aha! Aha! Dollars! dollars! dollars!"

"*The Devil*—Hurrah! I'm right glad! Now the old fellow will never do much more hurt to my kingdom!"

"*All Hell*—Hurrah! hurrah!"

It is needless to state that Dr. Bellamy remained "in the woods" with the church of his first love, and "his sepulchre is with us to this day." Of his scarcely less illustrious successor, Dr. Backus, time forbids me to speak. The ministry of these two men of God reached over a period of 70 years, more than half the history of the church. Under Dr. Bellamy, nearly two hundred and fifty united with the church, and under Dr. Backus, one hundred and forty-eight. Then followed the shorter ministries of Mr. Langdon of nine years, who received one hundred and three into the church; Mr. Stanton of four years, who received twenty-two, and Mr. Couch of five years, who received fifty-two.

These were sound, godly men, whose labors resulted in much good. The church received as its next pastor, from a sister church (Roxbury), Mr. Harrison, whose ministry was long, peaceful and prosperous. He received into membership one hundred and nine persons. Of the two later pastors—known to you all—still laboring in other fields, I may not speak. Mr. Loomis received seventy-three into the church; Mr. Wright, fourteen. Under the present pastorate, fifty-seven have united with the church.

Favored with such a ministry in the past, this daughter has been sound in the faith, a spiritual-minded church, and often refreshed with heavenly blessings. In such a family gathering as this, it may not be immodest for her briefly to state some facts in her history of which she feels justly proud. She was among the first churches in the land to see the folly and abandon the practice of the "half-way covenant." She is a temperance society by a vote of the church. She has never indulged in what has come to be a modern luxury to most churches—a stated supply. She believes in the holy ordinance of ecclesiastical marriage. In all her history there have been but four years in which she has been without a pastor. Finally, she claims to have the oldest Sabbath School (in the modern form of that institution) in the country, if not in the world. Forty years before Robert Raikes ever thought of such a thing, the first pastor of this church, with his deacons, was wont to gather, on Sabbath noon, the youth of the congregation into classes for instruction from the Bible and the Catechism. That Sabbath School has maintained an unbroken organization down to this day. The daughter on the hills has never been and probably never will be a large church. She is located in a sparsely settled

agricultural community, whose high hills and deep vales no railroad will dare look in the face. Emigration constantly drains off her young people. Two churches of other denominations have grown up by her side, and to a great extent out of her material. But she trusts that she has a mission in the future as she has had in the past. That mission will be to endeavor to sanctify the stream of young life that flows out from her as naturally as the waters run from her hills, that it may prove a blessing to the Church of Christ and to the world. If she shall send forth in the future any "streams that shall make glad the city of our God," she will not live in vain, even though she continue to be "among the least of Princes of Judea." May the daughter on the hills never be motherless, and may the mother in the valley never mourn the loss of her daughter until we are all taken to our Father's home in the church triumphant.

JUDEA!—Thou "praise of the Lord," seated on thy hill like the ancient hill of Zion; beautiful for situation, fit place for a new temple; "Unanimously and Lovingly Agreed upon," third pledge of our affections, we greet thee!

Response by Rev. W. S. COLTON.

MR. PRESIDENT:—I should almost have imagined, but for the address of the last speaker, (Rev. G. W. Banks), that I was in a Woman's Rights Convention, so much has been said about *Grandmother*, and *Mother*, and *Daughters*, in the remarks already made. But as I looked around me, and caught sight of various beards and mustaches, and other evidences of the presence of the masculine persuasion in the audience generally, and remembered that we had just been attending the dedication of the *Fathers* Monument, and saw from the programme that the speaking on this occasion was to be by *men*, I felt reassured of the character of the event which has convened us here.

I ought, in passing, to notice the observations of my good brother from Southbury, (Rev. Mr. Smith), who has informed us in glowing terms how delightfully his Church is situated on "the Jordan," and has dilated on the pleasantness of the region thereabout, in language highly wrought and very jubilant. But according to my studies in Sacred Geography, the Jordan runs

through *Judea*, and I feel quite disposed to claim a *part* of that same river and the lovely valley adjacent, for that third daughter, which I represent, in my response to-day. I have also read in an old prophet, words like these: "Thou *Bethlehem* in the land of *Judah* (*Judea?*) art not the least among the thousands of *Israel*," —so I think we on the hills may fairly share in the honors as well as territory of *some* of our neighbors.

Speaking of *Bethlehem*, sir, reminds me of the story Dr. Taylor used to tell of Drs. Bellamy and Baekus, the famous pastors of that church, formerly. Some one asked an old negro, who had sat for many years under their preaching, which of the two he liked the best? "Massa Bellamy, sir." "Why so, Sambo?" "'Cause, Massa Backus make God big—but Massa Bellamy make God bigger!"

May it be the aim and lot of him, the new pastor of this Church, so to magnify God to the people by his preaching, that some witness will in future time testify of *him*, that he also "made God bigger!"

Now, as to the occasion that has called us together, I have to observe, that whenever the children are invited home to Thanksgiving, the first thing they wish to find is, that *the old lady, their mother, is well*. If they discover her eye undimmed, her cheek still unfaded, and the old vigor in her step, then are they glad. The times of yore seem to come back. And this is what we discover about our mother here to-day. Certainly no signs of decrepitude or decay are visible in her appearance. I remember once taking tea with an old lady of nearly one hundred years of age; and, on asking the honor of escorting her to the table, and remarking admiringly how nimble was her step, and vigorous her appetite, she observed, as she was helped to biscuit and cake, and other things: "Old folks like good things as well as young folks!" She had, as I said, a good appetite, but she *died* about a week or two afterwards!

And so our old lady here in Woodbury, two hundred years old, has a quick step, and looks well, and for aught I have observed to the contrary, has shown as hearty an appetite in the town hall at the table to-day, as any of her daughters. Certainly she has shown the old hospitality.

Another thing children want to know when they come back to

Thanksgiving, is, *whether their mother is keeping house in the same old place.* If they found her in a boarding-house or hotel, how differently they would feel! The old feeling of the fireside and the table would be gone, and they would not, as of old, seem to be at *home*.

Now we are happy to find that our venerable mother here is still housekeeping. This goodly house, especially fair internally, gives satisfactory evidence of her good condition, and of her future prospects as well, and we are quite comforted on that score.

And then again, since this is a Thanksgiving Jubilee, the children are always eager to know if *their old mother's love for them still remains.*

Should there be any falling off of affection, how grieved they would be! The home would seem home no more, if the mother, as well as father, should be found to be changed in the quality of their feeling for their children.

We are happy to find no such change of affection in the hearty welcome we have all received here to-day. The mother church keeps the old love alive, and for that we thank God and are grateful.

One thing more the children want to know when they come back, as we now do, to the ancient homestead, and that is, if the old mother *keeps the flame of piety alive and pure*, as in the days of their youth. Is the Bible still in the same familiar place, and well worn, and loved, and reverenced, as of old?

We are glad to find evidence that such is the fact with our dear and venerated mother here, and rejoice that God, in His great goodness, has continued so spiritually to bless her in all these years, down to this hour.

In behalf of the church in Judea, therefore, I congratulate our mother church on her past and present prosperity. This third daughter on the hills, of which I am pastor, has outgrown her sister churches, and is the only one of them, also, that has even outgrown in numbers the mother herself, having now over 240 members, more than 60 having been admitted by profession within the four years of my ministry, while the Sabbath School embraces 375 scholars and teachers.

May these sister churches strive all in the coming times to be faithful to God, that, at last, their work on earth being done, all

the members of the same may hear the voice of the final Judge saying: "Well done, good and faithful servants; ye have been faithful over a few things, I will make you rulers over many things; enter ye into the joy of your Lord."

ROXBURY!—Dweller in the "hill country," and along the river of the hills, brave witness for the truth, and companion of the faithful, fourth blessing from a Bountiful Hand, we welcome thee to the old fireside!

Response by Rev. A. GOODENOUGH.

MR. CHAIRMAN:—Since this occasion naturally invites our attention to the past, I feel that it would be more appropriate could Roxbury be represented by one who has shared more fully than myself in her past history—yet I flatter myself that in one particular I may have my fitness as a representative. More than any other community in which it has been my fortune to live, ours is deficient in the gift which finds public expression in words—not of course from lack of thought or ability, (which we would not for a moment concede), but, as I take it, from excessive diffidence. If this brevity should be the soul of my wit, I shall have no doubt of the fitness of it, and hope it may be accounted wisdom.

As has been suggested, we also belong to the "hill country," and I think it might truly be said of us as of the chosen nation in the older time. "The Lord our God hath brought us into a *good* land; a land of brooks of water, of fountains and depths that spring out of valleys and hills; a land wherein we shall eat bread without scarceness; we shall not lack any good thing in it, a land whose stones are iron." A land of hills and valleys, and that drinketh water of the rain of heaven; a land which the Lord our God careth for; the eyes of the Lord our God are upon it from the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year."

Perhaps also, so far as it is the home of our choice, we may take some credit to ourselves—for, in the prophecy of Agur, the conies—a feeble folk—are pronounced "exceeding wise" because they make their dwelling among the rocks.

There is the less need that I should speak in detail concerning the history of our church, because we claim a share in the glory of that common history which has been already brought before us.

Though we claim to be the “heirs of all the ages,” we especially cherish the heritage which has come down to us through the faith and faithfulness of those earnest men and women who first planted the Gospel of Christ among these hills. We reverence the memory of those who before our time bravely witnessed for the truth, and through severe labors and discouragements kept their faith to the end, and it is our cherished ambition to hand down to our children untarnished the blessed inheritance we ourselves have received from our fathers. The hearts of many children are turning toward the Father to-day, inquiring for the old paths, and desiring to walk in them. (Indeed, I sometimes think that not only does our reverence extend to the old *paths*, but that we are occasionally proud to stick in the same old *rails*, which were worn by the ancient cart wheels).

We delight to gather to-day around the old fireside, rejoicing in the past, yet thankfully recognizing the larger growth of the present, and looking forward with joyful confidence to the days yet to come, in which the perfect harvest of good shall be garnered from the sown seed of the past.

Though allusions to a lady’s age are not always welcome, they seem to be the fashion to-day, and since our Mother Church seems proud of her matronly position, and herself invites us to celebrate her birthday, we join in congratulating her on bearing her years so well, and sincerely hope that she may live long in the land—vigorous in perpetual youth, strengthening her children by her sympathy, and guiding them by her example to the perfection of righteousness and faith.

SOUTH BRITAIN!—Dweller in the Southwest, along the banks of the “Great River,” “beyond the mountains,” fifth pledge of faith, hope and charity, right heartily do we welcome thee to the old family gathering!

Response by Rev. H. S. NEWCOMB.

Venerable mother in Israel, gladly at thy bidding we have come around “the mountains” and up the little river toward its source, here to receive thy greeting and to offer thee our warm congratulations at this happy family gathering. Had the pioneers who came before thee, mother, come by the path we came, they would

not have been under the necessity of clambering over those western rocks and hills to obtain their first view of this beautiful valley. But it is well for us that they missed their direction, and passed by the mouth of the little Pomperaug, seeking in vain farther up the "Great River" a more promising branch that should lead them to their future home; else this happy gathering would not now be enjoying the blessings of Heaven resulting from the prayer of the sainted Deacon John Minor, on Good Hill, where, after their weary climbing, they first cast eyes on their land of promise.

We feel somewhat abashed in view of the peculiar relations in which we stand to this family here gathered. We are thine only grand-daughter, ancient mother, the sole offspring of thine eldest daughter. We are aware, too, that there is here a more venerable presence, thine honored mother, making thy daughters granddaughters also; but at the same time making us the only little great-grand-daughter present. So, though our youth makes us bashful, we presume a little on thy tender regard and kind consideration.

We lead a pleasant life over there by the "Great River." But we would not have thee think that we are come from the ends of the earth, for we have heard that there are still higher mountains and greater rivers beyond; and some of our young people have even seen them.

We are enjoying a pleasant and prosperous life over there. We ourselves feel somewhat old, mother, having entered one year into the second century which thou art just leaving. But years do not weaken us. We have renewed our age, having put on the habiliments of youth, and we are looking for a prosperous future.

We think we have kept the pledge. We "hold fast the profession of our faith." We earnestly "contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints." We have that hope, which is "as an anchor of the soul;" we put on that "charity which is the bond of perfectness." We are looking forward to a larger, happier, more glorious family gathering than this; where "they shall come from the east and from the west, and from the north and from the south, and shall sit down in the kingdom of God." We hope to meet thee and thy daughters there; and to furnish a list of honored names written in the "Book of Life;" and to add

to the royal diadem of our King a cluster of stars that have shone with greater or less lustre here, and will shine still brighter there; among them, first and foremost, TYLER, champion of the faith; SMITH, early called to his reward, and BUTTERFIELD, embalmed in the memory of many still living. May we all meet there, where these distinctions of age shall be done away; where Christ shall be our elder Brother, and we, all brethren.

WOODBURY NORTH!—Latest and nearest, the child of our old age, co-dweller in this beautiful land of promise, and co-laborer in every good word and work in the Lord, with motherly pride and affection we welcome you to this our glad jubilee!

Response by Rev. JOHN CHURCHILL.

MR. PRESIDENT:—In responding, in behalf of the North Church, to the cordial invitation and welcome which you have extended to us, I beg leave to say that we are exceedingly happy to be present, and to be made welcome to participate with you in the Christian associations of this most interesting occasion. The emotions of the hour rise altogether too high for utterance, and I am not able to speak with that calmness and considerateness that would seem to be most becoming.

It is proper, perhaps, that the confession should here be publicly made, that as jealousies and disagreements sometimes arise among the members of the same family, who dwell upon the same old homestead, so there have been some discord and want of good fellowship between us; yet I am happy to say, that at no time has there been any total disruption of Christian confidence and fellowship, and that whatever there may have existed, of an unpleasant nature, at any time, has passed away, and is among the buried *debris* of the Past, and that to-day our fellowship and concord are without any barriers or embarrassments. Let us praise God together to-day, that churches that might seem to have local rival interests, are able, through His grace, to maintain the peace and “fellowship of the saints.”

I had supposed, sir, that it would be expected on this occasion, as the daughters return to their ancestral home, that they would relate their experiences, and tell their mother and their sisters what had been the dealings of a kind Providence with them since their separation.

We are here, Mr. President, to commemorate the Christian results of the planting of this church in the wilderness two hundred years ago, and we have come by your invitation, not only to join in your rejoicings, and to make our courtesy, but to tell you how we have prospered in our respective households. I hope I may be indulged, therefore, in a brief statement concerning the history of your youngest daughter.

The North Church in Woodbury was organized by a colony from this church, in the year of our Lord 1816, on the 25th of December. The colony consisted of eleven males and twenty females, only two of whom are now living. These, I see, are present here to-day.

The church remained without a pastor until the following July, when, on the 27th of that month, Rev. Grove L. Brownell was ordained and installed the pastor. Judging from the results of his labors, it must be allowed that he was a very capable and faithful minister of the Gospel. During the first year of his ministry, fifteen were added to the church by profession; the next year, ten; during the next three years, thirty-six; during the next three years, thirty-nine were added; the next three years, sixty-three; and so on at this ratio for the whole period of his ministry, which continued for about twenty-three years. The whole number received by profession during his ministry is two hundred and thirty-eight—a little more than an average of ten persons for each year. Forty were of the church when he entered on his ministry, and fifty-eight were added by letters from other churches, so that there were three hundred and seventy-five persons connected with the church during the first pastorate.

It is due to the men who constituted the church fifty-four years ago, nearly all of whom have passed away, to say that they were earnest, resolute, capable, Christian men, who shrank not from responsibility, who feared not hardship, and who made great personal sacrifices to build a church, and sustain the public institutions of religion. They present a noble example of Christian enterprise, which it would be equally noble and Christian, in their children and successors, to emulate. Possibly they constitute a portion of that “cloud of witnesses,” holding in view the doings of those who succeed them.

Under the ministry of Mr. Brownell's successor, which began

in April, 1840, in less than a year after his dismission, and which continued for a period of twenty-seven and a half years, they were gathered into the church by profession, one hundred and ninety-seven. Almost the entire congregation, at the close of that ministry, on the last Sabbath in September, 1867, were members of the church. Since then, for a period of two and a half years, the church has been without a pastor.

Such, briefly, Mr. President, has been the success of your youngest daughter, the North Church in Woodbury. "Hitherto the Lord hath helped us." Our course has been one of uniform prosperity, and we are grateful that we can bring, to-day, such a record of His goodness and mercy, to the honor not only of the Great Head of the Church, but of our venerable mother, as well.

I beg leave now, Mr. President; to give way, and introduce to the audience the Rev. Mr. Shipman, of Jewett City, but who, for a considerable number of years, was pastor of the Church in Southbury.

Rev. THOMAS L. SHIPMAN responded as follows:

The privilege is accorded me of recalling the name, and lingering a moment on the memory of one of your deceased pastors, Rev. Mr. Andrews. I made his acquaintance soon after I came into the vicinity. He impressed me, upon my first introduction, as a man of singular purity, an impression which all my future intercourse served only to confirm. He was a man of the nicest sensibilities; the chords in his heart vibrated to the slightest touch; his tender sensibilities often filled his eyes with tears. He had a look which none who knew him can forget, and which it would be vain for any one to imitate. There was that in his tone, when his soul was stirred to its depths, which strangely penetrated your heart. I remember at the meeting of the Consociation in Harkinton, in the summer of 1831—that year so remarkable for the outpourings of the Spirit—he was called to officiate at the administration of the Lord's Supper. As he rose, and cast a look over the assembly, every heart seemed to be moved, and before he closed the first sentence, the house became a perfect Bochim. It was not so much what he said, as his manner of saying it. "We are about to approach the foot of the Eternal throne, and how can

we come?" I was present at the ordination of his son-in-law, Rev. William Aitchison, who gave himself to Christ and to China. "My son," was uttered with a tone and a look which thrilled at least one heart. His prudence was memorable. At one time the regiment of which I was then chaplain met at Woodbury. Mr. Andrew was invited to dine with us. He sat at my side, and opposite to us sat a member of the society committee of a neighboring parish. "Mr. Andrew," said the gentleman, "do you know why Mr. _____ was dismissed from _____?" He waited a moment; I rather guess he shut his eyes. "I do not think I am sufficiently acquainted with the facts to state them correctly." Had he replied, "there was some disaffection toward him among his people," the report would have gone over the hills, gaining as it traveled: "Rev. Mr. Andrew, of Woodbury, says there was great disaffection at _____." He was a man of much culture; he held a polished pen. He often wrote for the *Quarterly Christian Spectator*, and his articles are among the choicest contributions to that periodical. I would particularly direct attention to the article in the December No. for 1833, entitled, "What is the real difference between the New Haven Divines and those who oppose them?" The paper was read at the minister's meeting in Southbury, and published at the request of the brethren. The controversy was at that time very earnest, not to say sometimes bitter. Whatever was then thought, or whatever may be still thought of the "New Haven Divines," all will agree that Mr. Andrew stated their position with great calmness and clearness. His article in the No. for September, 1830, entitled, "Review of Advice to a Young Christian," and the article in the March No. for 1832, entitled, "Assurance of their piety peculiarly the duty of Christians at the present day," are papers of great excellence. Mr. Andrew was one whom all who knew love to think of when alone. It makes us better at least for the moment only to think of him, and we love to talk of him when we meet, and one of our most cherished anticipations is renewing our acquaintance with him in our Father's kingdom.

Rev. Austin Isham was next called up by the chairman, and gave some very interesting reminiscences, a copy of which the editor has been unable to obtain.

The following letters were then read by the pastor:

Letter of Rev. CHARLES E. ROBINSON, of Troy, N. Y.

DEAR BROTHER LINSLEY:—I would greatly like to be with you at the celebration of the bi-centenary anniversary of your dear old church. I have an interest in, and love for that field which can never die. The fresh dewy morning of my ministry dawned there. There are souls there either brought to Jesus under my Ministry, or through the goodness of God, quickened by it, whose Christian lives, characteristics, and graces stand out with crystalline distinctness. There are certain hours and days, which amid the long procession of indistinguishable days, are radiant with sacred memories. There are some of those precious Tuesday evening Cottage prayer meetings, where the positions of individuals at the meeting, the expression of their faces, the words spoken and the songs we sang, are as clearly before me as if no time had elapsed.

Faces which we shall see no more. Blessed ones anticipating us in the joys of Heaven.

There are fields over which I strayed, bridges, leaning from which, I quieted my disturbed soul in the sweet murmuring of the stream. There are certain points on the summit of those Orenang rocks, from which I took in the unsurpassed loveliness of the Woodbury valley, all of which are now, by the power of memory, a part of my life, and which I would not willingly forget.

There was an impression made upon me in my pastorate there, growing out of the old associations which enfolded me, which, I cannot help feeling, must be valuable to any laborer in that field. Those three graves of Walker, Stoddard and Benedict, with their flocks all folded about them, (for I think that I laid away to her last resting place, the last member of the church under Pastor Benedict), all seemed to tell me to be faithful. I could not help the feeling that those old fathers were looking down with interest upon the thread of their work which they had let drop, at death, and which, in God's providence, after passing through various faithful hands, I had taken up.

May God continue to bless that old First Church through all the years until the bridegroom comes!

Present to the friends gathered there my fraternal greetings,

and my sincere regrets, that in this case, I cannot be in two places at once.

Believe me, my dear Brother, to be your attached friend now, as I was formerly your Pastor.

CHARLES E. ROBINSON.

TROY, N. Y., April 20th, 1870.

P. S.—Please send me, if convenient, some account of your gathering.

Letter of Rev. CHARLES LITTLE, of Nebraska.

LINCOLN, NEBRASKA, April, 13th, 1870.

P. M. TROWBRIDGE, Esq., *Chairman of Committee.*

DEAR BROTHER:—I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your note of the 4th inst., inviting me to participate in the proposed observance of the two hundredth anniversary of your church.

It would give me very great pleasure to be present on that occasion, there to renew the friendships of the past. Of the places on earth, not few nor very many, to which memory delights to return and to recall the sacred associations there formed, one of the freshest and most cherished is Woodbury.

The parsonage, the office-study, the church, the lecture-room, the domestic circles, the familiar faces, the cemeteries, the hills and valleys—these all come before me with clear remembrances.

Though my stay with you was short, yet I expect to enjoy the fruits of it throughout eternity.

That old church—it ought to be greatly profitable for you to rehearse its history for two hundred years.

The good which it has accomplished—there are many in heaven who know more fully what that is than the Orators who will address you.

That invisible company—those gone before; I see no reason why God may not commission them to be present; how much more deeply interesting will they appear to those permitted to behold them, than the crowds which in bodily presence will honor the occasion.

Most gladly would I be with you then and there, but to go and return would require a journey of three thousand miles, which is more than I can perform at present.

Please present my love and best wishes to all my friends, and accept the assurance of my earnest desire for the future prosperity of the church.

I remain yours, in the bonds of the Gospel,

CHARLES LITTLE.

Letter of Rev. PHILo JUDSON, of Rocky Hill.

[Mr. Judson was born in this church, and baptized the “eighth day.” He graduated in 1809; became a successful minister, and it is said more than 1600 persons have been gathered into the churches in which he has labored, through his instrumentality. He is now 90 years old.]

ROCKY HILL, *May 2d.*

BR. TROWBRIDGE:

Dear Sir:—O, I thank you for your very interesting and talented letter. I am feeble, not able to go out; been confined all winter; do not go out now. I should be glad to be there; it would do my soul good. I hope I may have health to call on you at Woodbury. Your letter did my soul good. Head is much affected; severe cough.

Your letter took deep hold of my feelings. The Lord bless you. Pray for me.

Yours truly,

PHILo JUDSON.

[*Extract from a recent letter written by Miss CHARLOTTE R. ANDREW, daughter of the late Rev. SAMUEL R. ANDREW, of New Haven.*].

You ask for the date of my blessed father’s death, and his age. He was seventy-one, and died May 26, 1858. If it ever be permitted the spirits of the departed to revisit their dear old homes on earth, will it not be permitted *him* to unite on that anniversary day with his beloved church in their service of praise and thanksgiving to God? I am almost sure he will be invisibly present.

At the close of reading the letters, a pleasing incident occurred. During the collation at the Town Hall, a large and beautiful loaf of cake, made by Mrs. Judson, wife of Deacon Truman Judson,

bearing a miniature flag, labeled "STRATFORD," surrounded by seven smaller loaves, bearing the names of the other churches represented on the occasion, occupied the place of honor at the principal table. This loaf was, at this point, presented by Rev. Mr. Churchill, with appropriate remarks, to Rev. Mr. Hall, the representative of the mother church, as a token of filial regard from her daughter. Mr. Hall received the gift with some playful and fitting remarks, and promised to be "faithful to his charge."

The closing prayer of the day was then made by the pastor:

And now, Gracious God, our Heavenly Father, from whom cometh every good and perfect gift, we bless Thee for casting our lot in this land of civil and religious freedom, and for crowning our lives with such signal tokens of Thy goodness. We praise Thee for wise, virtuous, heroic, Christian ancestors, and beseech Thee that we may copy their example, and carry forward their work. May we remember the word of our Puritan leader across the sea, that more light is yet to break forth from Thy book. May we realize that for us, greater achievements over self and the world are possible—that higher goals of duty may be reached, and richer trophies won for Christ. Therefore, forgetting the things behind, and reaching forth unto those before, may we press toward the mark of our high calling of God in Christ Jesus. May we seek to be enrobed in all the virtues and graces of the Spirit, so as to shed the purest light and exert the most benign influence upon the world. May we all live and serve Thee, remembering that we must soon stand before Thee, since we are strangers and sojourners here, as were all our fathers. We thank thee, O Lord, for this bright and genial day, and for the interest and harmony attending these exercises. May they conduce to the highest good of all, and the glory of Thy name. And when one after another we are called away from earth, may we come at last to the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in Heaven. And to Thy great name, Father, Son and Holy Ghost, shall be all the praise and glory forever. *Amen.*

At the close of the prayer, the benediction was pronounced, and the delighted audience separated for their homes among the hills and valleys, never again to meet in this old church on a like memorable occasion.

The singing on the occasion was given by the united choirs of this and the North Church, and was of a very high order. The quartettes at the opening of the communion, and at the Fathers' Monument, were particularly commended by musical critics.

At a meeting of the church on the eighth day of May, 1870, the following letter was unanimously adopted, and the committee instructed to forward it, which was accordingly done :

First Congregational Church in Woodbury, to the Congregational Church in Stratford.

DEAR BRETHREN OF OUR MOTHER CHURCH :—We can but communicate to you the great satisfaction and profit we received from your presence, through your Pastor, one Deacon, and some of your members, at the recent family gathering of this your filial daughter. We have ever revered and honored you, but this interview has bound us, and our six daughters to you with ties which will endure amid the glories of the church triumphant. Praying for your prosperity, we are yours in the bonds of the Gospel.

Given by vote of the Church,

P. M. TROWBRIDGE,
J. H. LINSLEY,
Wm. COTHREN, } Committee.

WOODBURY, *May 8th, 1870.*

First Church in Woodbury, to the North Church.

DEAR BRETHREN :—We tender you our heart-felt appreciation of the generous assistance you were pleased to give us during our Bi-Centennial Jubilee, which has just passed. Be assured we shall ever hold ourselves ready to reciprocate such favors whenever occasion may require.

By vote of the Church,

P. M. TROWBRIDGE,
J. H. LINSLEY,
Wm. COTHREN, } Committee.

WOODBURY, *May 8th, 1870.*

Letter of Rev. ROBERT G. WILLIAMS, Castleton, Vt.

STATE NORMAL SCHOOL,
Castleton, Vt., June 1st, 1870. }

P. M. TROWBRIDGE—

My Dear Friend—I thank you for the notice and report of the proceedings of the “Jubilee.” I read every word with sorrow and pleasure. I had made great effort to be present at that interesting occasion. I recalled the celebration in which the towns, as such, united eleven years ago, and knew that when you undertook anything of the kind it would be made a success. I desired to be present to participate and enjoy, to renew friendships which have been slumbering, not broken, not even interrupted, and to weave one more strand in the warp or woof of pleasant memories and the web of life.

My press of duties here had prevented any preparation on my part, and I felt, as I left home on the journey to join you, that I was going as if wholly to receive a good and a pleasure, entirely unprepared to contribute what others had a right to expect of me. But I trusted to the kindness of old friends to excuse this want of preparation, and know I should have been safe in this trust.

One thought was continually present in my mind. I could not analyze it into particulars. I could not frame it into words, but there was, as it were, a vision before my eyes, a gathering of forms and faces familiar and beloved: but more real than these visible objects was an almost felt presence of kindred and sympathizing spirits, to whose influence I cheerfully submitted myself, and among whom I seemed to be absorbed, and to lose myself as a drop lost in commingling drops. Then from such a meeting here, of friends who are here, my mind turned forward to a meeting in a larger temple, to celebrate a great event more than two centuries past, where stronger ties, and more tender sympathy should bind all into one perfect union, where not one atom of alloy could in the least affect their perfect bliss. If it were right to expect pleasure in a meeting at Woodbury, how much more might we be sure of enjoying a fullness thereof in the other meeting. Everything necessary to the fullest happiness of His beloved will be provided for them. Then they shall sit down at the Marriage Supper of the Lamb. Such meeting I believe in, and feel that I may antici-

pate and rest in full faith that it will far exceed all that has entered into the heart of man to conceive. Such hope lightens the burdens of our pilgrimage and shortens the journey. In His own time the rest will be entered into.

I would repeat my kind remembrances to all friends.

Truly yours,

R. G. WILLIAMS.

We remark, in conclusion, that the results of a celebration, such as we have recorded, cannot but be vastly beneficial to the Church whose history it celebrates, and the community in which it is located. It recalls to the attention of all how faithful in His promises to His chosen people is the Great Head of the Church. Few churches in the land can claim so remarkable a fulfilment of these "promises" as this revered old church. A review of all these wonderful works for the long period of two hundred years, brings forcibly to the mind, that we are a "covenant people," and in the kind care of a "covenant-keeping God."

A

REPORT

OF THE

BI-CENTENNIAL JUBILEE

OF THE

FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH,

IN

WOODBURY, CONN.,

Held May 5th, 1870.

BY WILLIAM COTHREN.

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